No. 1231
6 March –
19 March 2009
£1.50

PRIVATE EYE

DON'T DO IT, SIR FRED!

RBS PENSION SCANDAL LATEST

All our bodywork repairs come with a three-year warranty. By then your son might have learnt to drive properly.

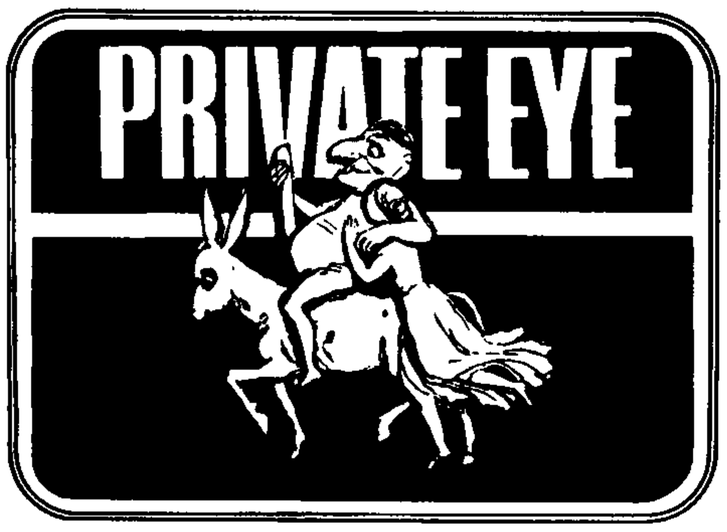
Zurich HelpPoint™ is here when you need more than just insurance. If your car needs to be repaired after an accident, you want to know it will be repaired properly. So the fact that all bodywork done by our approved repair network comes with a three-year warranty should give you confidence. More than you have in your son's driving anyway. For more information, visit www.zurich.co.uk

Here to help your world.

ZURICH®

Because change happenz®

Conditions apply. Underwritten by Zurich Insurance plc.



Gunning for the truth

Jade Goody & Fleet Street's deadly pen 4
Cricket: How the hacks were bowled over 5
Velvet glove for the Iron Lady: Eye TV 8
Lord Rothermere, non-dom press baron 26
The NHS's bloodiest scandal yet 27
Hearts, minds & BAE: Defence Special 28
This septic isle: Slicker on Antigua 29

BONUS BALLS

"I think it is sometimes forgotten that bonuses are a big source of extra income tax" – ***Gordon Brown** defends mega City bonuses, June 2004*

"We are leading the world in sweeping away the old short-term bonus culture of the past" – ***Gordon Brown**, February 2009*

H.M.S. BRITANNIA

Run aground on the Goodwin Sands

Spotted at Manchester Airport

EDITORIAL
6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN.
Tel: 020 7437 4017. Fax: 020 7437 0705.
Email: strobes@private-eye.co.uk
Website: www.private-eye.co.uk

PRIVATE EYE SUBSCRIPTIONS/SALES
PO Box 326, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 8FA.
Subscription enquiries: 01795 414 871
Overseas: +44 (0) 1795 414 870 Fax: 01795 414 555.
Web: www.subsonline.co.uk
Email: private-eye@servicehelpline.co.uk

SUBSCRIPTION RATES
£28 per annum. Europe and Eire £34. Airmail (rest of world) £38.
Cheques/POs to Private Eye. Mastercard/Visa.

ADVERTISING
Ten Alps Publishing, 9 Savoy Street, London WC2E 7HR.
Email: private-eye@tenalpspublishing.com
Display: 020 7878 2366 **Classified:** 020 7240 9129

Published by Pressdram Ltd, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN. **Printed** by BGP Ltd, Bicester OX6 7QZ.
Distributed by COMAG Tavistock Road, West Drayton, Middlesex, UB7 7QE. Tel 01895 433600.

ABC

SKELETON STAFF

ROYAL Bank of Scotland's disastrous acquisition of ABN Amro was just the largest in a series of questionable investments by the bank over a number of years, most of which it is now trying to offload.

As pressure grows on Sir Fred Goodwin, the fortunes of the RBS director who as head of equity finance and corporate banking oversaw the spending spree from 2001 to 2005 are looking up. After leaving private equity group Renaissance a few weeks ago, Rory Cullinan, reportedly a hunting and skiing partner of new RBS boss Stephen Hester, has now been re-employed by… RBS.

Is that the sound of skeletons being squeezed back into cupboards?

NUMBER CRUNCHING

£13,500 Yearly salary of full-time customer service operator for Royal Bank of Scotland

£13,300 Weekly pension of former chief executive of Royal Bank of Scotland

WALKER'S CRISPED

NOW that chancellor Alistair Darling's man in charge of the taxpayer-owned banks, Glen Moreno, has agreed to walk following the *Eye's* revelations of his Liechtenstein tax-dodging connections, how long for the man brought in to run the government's review of British banks' governance, Sir David Walker?

Walker, as the last *Eye* reported, led investment bank Morgan Stanley for several years and prefers more tropical climes for his tax avoidance. Not only was the bank a big fat bonus-payer during his six years as international chairman and European executive chairman up to December 2000 (plus a later spell in 2004/05 as international chairman), but as a recent tax tribunal reveals it was also a big-time and very crafty tax avoider.

In July 2000 two British companies in the Morgan Stanley empire, Bayfine UK and Bayfine UK Products, entered into equal and opposite derivative contracts with the Bank of America. These deals amounted to no more than bets on both horses in a two-horse race. One would win and the other lose, in the event to the tune of precisely £119.8m.

But here's the trick: the loss that Bayfine UK Products made would be tax-deductible against the bank's other UK profits, while the profit that Bayfine UK made would not be taxable. Intended result? A £36m (£119.8m @ 30 percent) hand-out from British taxpayers for doing bugger-all except send money round in a circle.

Tax experts say such a largescale scheme would always go before a bank's board for approval, putting Sir David squarely in the frame for this blatant attempt to chisel millions out of the exchequer. Just the man to restore sound governance to Britain's banks!

LORD TURNAROUND

LORD Turner's unstinting criticism of the regulatory system shouldn't have surprise too many. After all, he was never going to blame the bankers, having been one of them himself until not too long ago.

Up to 2006 Turner was vice-chairman of Merrill Lynch Europe as it gorged on the sub-prime markets that eventually brought the markets and a number of banks, including Merrill Lynch, down. The bank's London office was a dab-hand at collateralised debt obligations, structured credit derivatives and other toxic products. The day before Turner appeared in parliament, Merrill revealed that it had lost $26.7bn in 2008.

Alongside Turner sat the FSA's relatively new chief executive Hector Sants, whose ploy was to blame it all on the *ancien regime*. But Sants himself was promoted from heading the regulator's "wholesale" division in July 2007 on the back of a decent deregulatory showing since his recruitment from Credit Suisse in 2004. His main achievement was in 2005 to conclude that most hedge funds should "remain subject only to a light touch supervisory approach". Er, which is why the FSA now proposes to clamp down hard on them.

SWEETENER & SOUR

SOON after one half of private consortium Metrix dropped out of the beleaguered PFI deal to privatise military training (*Eyes passim*) because of escalating costs (before the contract is even signed), defence secretary John Hutton has quietly sanctioned a further £40m in "risk-reduction activity".

This is shorthand for a subsidy to Metrix, led by the privatised defence technology firm Qinetiq which has admitted it will be in deep doo-doo without the contract. The company has already been given £9m but now needs more to "mature the deal and maintain the mobilisation of Metrix resources".

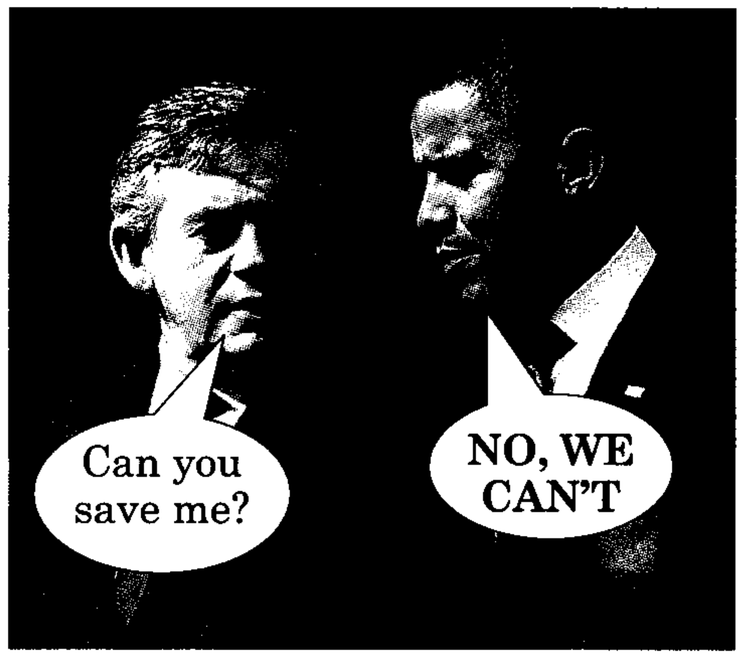
The MoD had been hoping to keep this sweetener quiet, paying lip service to parliamentary niceties through an "unnumbered command paper" without any announcement. But Tory MP Mark Pritchard, arch-opponent of the deal, spotted it and has filed an objection. So much for slipping the deal through on the quiet.

● *Defence Special, p28*

● **"THE intense public interest in the couple will not help the grieving process," declared the *Times* in a long piece speculating as to how Samantha Cameron might feel following the death of her eldest child.**

"Reserved and private, Mrs Cameron did not seek the limelight but found herself on the public stage when her husband became party leader. Friends said last night they hoped that she would be left alone."

Naturally, this was illustrated with a large picture of Samantha Cameron crying in the street as she returned from the hospital where her child had died.



Street Of Shame

"ONLY little people pay taxes, New York billionairess Leona Helmsley once said," thundered the *Sun*'s editorial column on 16 February. "Our top bankers are guilty of the same insufferable arrogance."

Your starter for 10: can you think of another insufferably arrogant Manhattan-dwelling fat-cat who has arranged his complex network of global businesses around offshore holding companies in tax havens such as the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands and the Dutch Antilles, and who in 2005 shifted his family's investment company to Bermuda in order to save them having to pay around £500m in tax in his birthplace, Australia?

Clue: He owns the *Sun*.

ALTHOUGH Ford is axing 850 jobs in Britain because of the "serious economic situation affecting the automotive industry", one aspect of its business remains happily unaffected by all the doom and gloom – lavishing hospitality on motoring correspondents.

To get them in the mood for this week's Geneva Motor Show, Ford flew 16 hacks out to Courmayeur last Friday for a long freebie weekend of skiing and sluicing. Treble Glühweins all round!

WHEN the *Sun*'s TV editor Sara Nathan flew into Heathrow last week, returning from a trip to South America, she was surprised to find a posse of Fleet Street hacks in the arrivals hall. "What," she asked, "are you doing here?"

She found out soon enough as they darted off in pursuit of another passenger, weirdo Catholic bishop Richard Williamson. Nathan, oblivious to his presence on the plane, had missed her chance to do a bit of in-flight doorstepping.

"Please don't tell Chris Pharo," she begged the hacks, terrified of a bollocking from the *Sun*'s excitable head of news if he heard of her missed scoop. Fear not, Sara: your secret is safe.

ANOTHER week, another irresistible cover-line in Dirty Des's *OK!* magazine: "At Home With Lily Allen: World Exclusive."

Before parting with their £2.95, punters would have been wise to recall previous cover-lines that suckered them in, such as "Jordan – Why I Walked Out on Pete" (she didn't), "Shock Wedding Exclusive: Nikki Grahame Marries Andy Scott-Lee" (she hadn't) or "Cheryl – Baby Boy Predicted" (Cheryl Cole wasn't pregnant, but a "renowned psychic" said that if she ever was she'd probably have a boy).

And so to the Lily Allen scoop of 24 February: "The singer opened the doors of her Kilburn home and revealed that she might quit showbiz for good..." Except, of course, that she didn't. The mag has now been forced by the popstrel's lawyers to apologise, admitting that "the suggestion in our article that she provided us with an interview was misleading".

But why should Dirty Des worry? The occasional legal payout for his cover lies – like the £3,500 fine incurred a few years ago after trading standards prosecuted him for falsely claiming to have photos of Madonna's wedding – is far less than he makes from fleecing gullible readers every week.

THE *Daily Star*'s "British jobs for British workers" campaign thundered into action this month and, as the paper put it, "united the country as our posters were plastered across offices and building sites... HUNDREDS of protesters holding *Daily Star* 'British jobs for British workers' posters marched against migrants taking their contracts."

Fans of direct action have also been able to enjoy themselves in the company of the paper's Page 3 babes, who in recent weeks have included "Tasty Scandinavian babe Malene, a real Danish sizzler," and "our Czech mate Jana."

HACKWATCH

Jade Goody's Wedding

To love and comfort her...

"The bubble has finally burst for the thick, foul-mouthed and thoroughly nasty piece of work that is Jade Goody... As for Jade's boyfriend, Jack Tweed, all I can say is they deserve each other. He actually makes her look reasonably intelligent." – *Lorraine Kelly,* Sun, *20 Jan 2007*

"I sincerely hope Jade Goody has her wish for a perfect wedding day tomorrow..." – *Lorraine Kelly,* Sun, *21 Feb 2009*

For richer, for poorer...

"Jade Goody has turned down a marriage proposal from boyfriend Jack Tweedy. That's the persistently brawling Jack who may end up behind bars after a series of driving offences, is currently jobless and, were he not loafing around watching his wealthy lover's TV all day, would almost certainly be residing in well-deserved obscurity." – Mirror, *20 December 2006*

"Jade and Jack: The Wedding of the Decade – Jade's boys sit proudly on her lap as she weds true love Jack." – Mirror, *23 February 2009*

Forsaking all others...

"She will ignore constant pain to make herself look radiant for the man she loves, Jack Tweed. She will banish all negative thoughts..." – Sunday People, *22 Feb 2009*

"Shamed telly star Jade Goody faced fresh heartache last night after her love-rat boyfriend was caught by *The People* begging girls for sex on a lads-only trip. Randy Jack Tweed, 19, barely gave a second thought to his famous girlfriend... *The People* can reveal that Jack:

OFFERED to pay our girl £35 to perform a sex act on him. BEGGED for group sex with our girl and her pal. DEMANDED the girls put on a lesbian show." – Sunday People, *11 March 2007*

"Let's all raise a toast to Jade Goody tomorrow as her dying wish comes true. Clad in a gorgeous cream silk gown, Jade will become a bride and marry her devoted sweetheart Jack Tweed... The *Sun*'s warmest congratulations go to Jade and Jack on their marriage." – Sun, *23 February 2009*

"WHY JADE SHOULD STAY SINGLE... The couple have been through a string of crises. The *Sun* caught Jack cheating on a Spanish holiday and discovered Jade playing away with a footballer. Jack has been in fights while Jade punched a granny and both have been banned from driving." – Sun *22 August 2007*

Will you, the familles and friends...

"Jade made her way weakly down the aisle towards handsome Jack, no doubt helped by the warmth and love emanating from her friends and family." – OK! *magazine, which had the exclusive deal for coverage of the wedding, and which banned Goody's close friend Lucie Cave from attending because she works for a rival magazine. Goody requested that Cave be allowed to come "in a personal capacity" but was overruled.*

To have and to hold...

"THE JADE BOOK THEY ALL WANTED: Exclusively serialised in *The Sun* this week" – *Headline on extracts from Jade Goody's 'Catch A Falling Star',* Sun, *24 February 2009. The book has been available in bookshops for five months, and was previously serialised in September 2008 – in the* Sun.

All that I have I share with you...

"Has Jade's life on camera gone too far? Click to watch" – *BBC News website*

...and joyful commitment to the end of their lives...

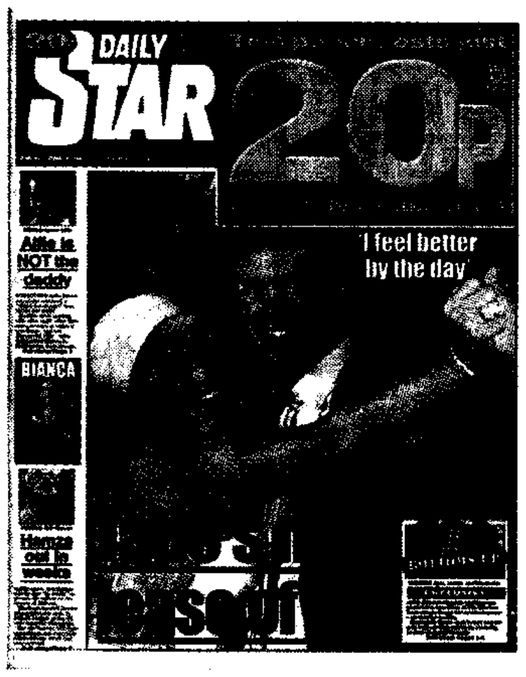
"Jade says goodbye" – *Front-page headline of* Sun, *24 February, which referred to fact that cancer-stricken star had said goodbye... to some friends when leaving a hotel*

"Jade: I may not make it to next week" – *Front-page headline of* Sunday Mirror, *1 March*

"Jade: I'll be dead in a month" – *Front-page headline of the* Sun, *28 February*

"Jade: My final week." – *Front-page headline of* Daily Star, *2 March*

THE *Daily Star*'s definition of "exclusive", always elastic, stretched to bungee-jumping lengths with its front-page splash on 18 February. Desperate for a scoop about Jade Goody's imminent nuptials, editor Dawn Neesom managed to find a picture of "smiling Jade in her wedding gown" with her husband-to-be, Jack Tweedy.



The "exclusive" (below left) is in fact a marriage all of its own. The photo features a healthy Miss Goody dressed in white lace and smiling in Jack's arms. But the full head of hair she enjoyed when the picture was taken last year in Las Vegas for her "fantasy" wedding (below centre) has gone. Thanks to some computer wizardry, the photo has been "flipped" round and Jade's hair has been replaced by a headscarf – a headscarf taken, most tastefully, from an old picture of another celeb cancer victim, Kylie Minogue (left)!

MORE journalistic triumphs from the age of the freebie: the *London Lite* spotted U2 frontman Bono out and about on the evening of 17 February. "He's in town to perform with his band U2 at the Brit Awards tonight," the paper noted on page 8 the following afternoon.

Page 3 of the same day's edition, meanwhile, claimed Bono had spent the previous evening "at the launch of the Armani store on Fifth Avenue" as part of New York Fashion Week. Talented man.

JUST FANCY THAT!

"Why does society still feel it needs to demean brainy women like Gail Trimble by assessing them like cuts of meat? Is there something about her refusal to conform to a fashionable or overtly sexy appearance that threatens our insecure, looks-obsessed age? I notice that no one commented on the appearance of the cute blond equally-fast-on-the-buzzer captain of Manchester University, the losing finalists. But then he was a bloke…" – Allison Pearson on Gail Trimble, *Daily Mail*, 25 February.

"With her long, rather severe Victorian hair and shrewd, kindly gaze peering out from a pair of functional specs…" – Allison Pearson on Gail Trimble, *Daily Mail*, 25 February.

"Simon Cowell says he wants to have his body cryogenically frozen when he dies. Looks like he's already had his face done, so I hope he gets a discount." – Allison Pearson, *Daily Mail*, 25 February.

FURTHER evidence, if any were needed, of the *Daily Telegraph*'s transformation into the *Maily Telegraph*: its newsdesk, led by former *Mail*-men Tony Gallagher and Chris Evans, has admitted that it prefers to rely on the *Daily Mail* for news rather than its own sources.

Newspapers have always played catch-up with rivals by plagiarising scoops and buy-ups when first editions drop at night. But the *Telegraph* now rips stories off the *Mail* website within minutes of them appearing on the internet, even though the same stories were filed to the *Telegraph* hours earlier. Which, of course, saves the cash-strapped paper from having to pay anyone. When fuming freelances and press agencies demand payment, they are rebuffed with the line: "We didn't see your copy – we got that from the *Daily Mail* website."

Editor Thirsty Will Lewis is feeling more pleased with himself than ever, meanwhile. His recent hard work in Davos, a-boozing and a-schmoozing, was rewarded last week when the World Economic Forum named Lewis – along with Coldplay singer Chris Martin – as one of their "Young Global Leaders" for 2009.

"THE monster created by Labour must be tamed," the *Daily Telegraph* roared last week, in a ferocious attack on the public sector – "the massed ranks of Labour's carefully cultivated client state", with their "non jobs" and "index linked pensions".

Happily, the *Telegraph*'s antipathy doesn't stop it snuggling up to the monster now and again. Just a week earlier it ran a shiny eight-page pull-out, "The Public Sector", sponsored by the Ministry of Justice and the Audit Commission, and packed full of advertisements for jobs or indeed non-jobs.

THE *Daily Mirror*, never happier than when fighting the class war, has been gleefully hurling grenades at those swinish bankers.

"When Gordon Brown and Alistair Darling acted against the bank bonuses at RBS they did so with dramatic effect," it declares. "The days of casino capitalism are over. Others will learn the message that pay must be related to an honest day's work and not given as incentive for wheeler-dealing."

Could it by any chance be referring to the *Mirror*'s own chief executive, Sly Bailey? In 2007 the board of Trinity Mirror awarded Bailey a maximum bonus of £793,000 -- equivalent to 110 percent of her salary – for supposedly meeting her "performance" targets, which took her total pay to £1.53m. And how has Trinity Mirror performed since 2007? Debts have ballooned, the shares have crashed more than 90 percent from 600p to 35p, on a par with Royal Bank of Scotland and HBOS, and last week the company reported an annual loss of £73m in 2008.

Unlike the bank bosses in the "90% club", however, Bailey has kept both her job and her loot.

TWENTY20 HINDSIGHT

"SIR Allen Stanford," Nick Hoult wrote in the *Telegraph* last year, "is a difficult man to say no to."

He certainly is, and the England and Wales Cricket Board weren't the only people who found the cricket-loving Texan mogul hard to resist. What about the sports hacks flown out at great expense to the Caribbean last February as Stanford began his PR blitz?

Back then, Hoult noted that "the billionaire made his fortune from wealth management – the Stanford Corporation makes the rich even richer... He is also perhaps the shrewdest man to have become involved in cricket." The *Times*'s man on the West Indies junket reported that "every team will benefit from the largesse of Sir Allen Stanford. Also on the Caribbean freebie was Andy Bull of the *Guardian* and *Observer*, who predicted that Stanford's "ambition, money and organisation [would] have a major impact on the evolution of cricket".

Had all that sun gone to their heads? Twelve months on, the hacks are aghast that anyone could have fallen for the vulgar huckster. "England's leadership ignored the warnings and forged close links with Sir Allen Stanford," Hoult thunders. "It must explain how and why – and what happens next." Bull's profile for the *Grauniad* website accuses him of being all bluster: "Stanford placed himself at the very centre of his business. Everything orbited around his 6ft 4in bulk. And then, as the gyre widened, things fell apart." Not quite the "impact on cricket" that Bull had forecast.

Sir Ian Botham is indignant. "The sorry Stanford debacle leaves English cricket with nothing but egg on its face. It has been a disaster," Beefy rages in his *Mirror* column. "Someone has to be accountable. Giles Clarke pushed for this and he has to face the music. He was the one telling everyone Stanford was the way to go – and it has been a huge mess." Also with egg on his face was a certain IT Botham, who had no qualms about backing the Stanford Twenty20 bonanza last year. He hailed the Texan as "the new Kerry Packer... when I first started, he shook the whole place up. I think what Stanford is doing is shaking it up again", and was pictured beaming alongside him when the event was officially launched at Lord's last summer. "It's a real bonus for the players," he said in October, when the Stanford Super Series got under way, "and one they should just go out there and enjoy… Just stop whingeing and get on with it."

Meanwhile, cricket purist Geoffrey Boycott has taken the moral high ground. "If you put money ahead of principle, and ahead of a genuine love of sport, this is where it takes you," he sermonises in the *Daily Telegraph*. Can this be the same Geoffrey Boycott who walked away from England to take apartheid South Africa's filthy lucre on a rebel tour of the country? Obviously not.

The hack looking most foolish – against strong competition – is the BBC's portly sports editor Mihir Bose, who believes that his background as qualified chartered accountant enables him to sniff out financial skulduggery at a hundred paces. If he noticed a whiff of rotten eggs when he met Stanford last October, however, he neglected to mention it.

"Sir Allen did not know my name, and what is more the name Mihir is not one he is familiar with," Bose wrote after an evening with Sir Allen at the Sticky Wicket, the pavilion-cum-bar at his private ground in Antigua. "But when we met, he took off his dark glasses and asked me several times what my name was and how I pronounced it… I give this example as an indication of the sort of man he is and how he seeks to reach out to people."

Stanford certainly reached out to Bose. "He has something in common with Tony Blair, Bill Clinton and even Nelson Mandela," the BBC man raved. "All these men, who I have met, have one great quality – when they meet you they make you feel you are the only important person in the room."

● "Kevin Pietersen yesterday admitted that he was excited about the idea of Allen Stanford getting involved with the English game… 'It sounds great, very exciting for players and spectators,' Pietersen said at Hampshire's Rose Bowl ground." – *Daily Telegraph*, 16 April 2008.

"Stanford was a sleazebag. I was very uncomfortable with the whole Stanford thing. It was not that I was captain at the time, it was the uncomfortable situation of everybody thinking the England team had been sold… Those kind of things just didn't seem right to me." – Kevin Pietersen, *News of the World*, 22 February 2009.

LEBEDEV'S DIARY

WHEN KGB veteran Alexander Lebedev bought the London *Evening Standard*, we predicted a swift change in the paper's attitude to Ken Livingstone, a chum and former employer of Lebedev's PR man, Matthew Freud. Sure enough, last Wednesday it carried a long and friendly interview with the old newt-fancier, the first in seven years.

Meanwhile, Lebedev was introducing himself to the liberal establishment, popping in for a chat with Gordon Brown at No 10 and spending hours at the new *Guardian* office charming the paper's media hacks. "Lebedev," the *Grauniad* observed, "has mostly been greeted with open arms." Which means a few ticklish questions have been ignored.

One was raised by the *Standard*'s executive editor Anne McElvoy when Lebedev met the staff last week. She had hoped for preferment under the new owner – especially given her fluent Russian – but with the top jobs now given to Geordie Greig and Sarah Sands, she had nothing to lose. How, she demanded, can you claim to be a critic of Putin when everyone knows that no big businessman flourishes in today's Russia unless he's Putin's friend? Lebedev was stumped.

A more immediate question, which no one has yet mentioned, is how the *Standard* and the freebie *London Lite* can co-exist. *Lite* still takes all its copy from the *Standard* (free of charge, incredibly) and is printed on the same presses. But they no longer have the same owner, so they are now more like direct rivals than sister-titles.

The two papers normally alternate on the presses, which can cause problems: if an edition of one title runs late, the other sometimes tries to sneak in ahead. But when they had the same ultimate bosses there was at least a common arbiter who could decide priorities.

In his deal with Rothermere, Lebedev rather carelessly failed to insist on a contractual entitlement to fixed times on the presses. This means that Rothermere's printers can give precedence to *London Lite* if both titles need the presses at the same time, leaving the poor old *Standard* twiddling its thumbs and cooling its heels. And, short of calling in a KGB hit-squad, Lebedev can do nothing about it.

"Newspapers should do well out of the downturn"

THE stumbling block for the Royal Mail part-privatisation – if it survives – may well be pensions.

Architect of the proposals Richard Hooper describes the plan of dealing with the £8bn pension deficit, contracting out services and the sell-off as "not a la carte but a three-course meal".

But, quite apart from general opposition at home, the pension move also has to clear European law banning unfair "state aid". To achieve this, any government help has to leave the Royal Mail standing on its own two feet. This could well, according the small print of Hooper's report, involve forcing the "closure of the final-salary pension scheme to existing members".

When a less drastic move was mooted for civil servants three years ago, unions threatened serious industrial action and the government backed off quicker than you can say tax-free lump sum. Lord Mandelson will need a stiffer resolve if he is to face down the posties.

MEANWHILE the Dutch postal firm TNT is still the most likely "partner" in any partial sale – despite its past involvement in a multi-million-pound tax-avoidance scheme.

In 2004 TNT reported there was a "tax investigation" into a British subsidiary. The firm admitted the liability for unpaid tax was between €100m and €250m. In 2007 TNT announced it had settled the issue but will not say how much it paid HM Revenue & Customs.

The firm's internal investigation found "a number of illegal acts had taken place. They related to certain documents being falsified or backdated", although TNT maintains that "the integrity of past and present members of the board and management… is not in doubt".

As well as tax avoidance, TNT has other issues that might bother opponents of Mandy's scheme. TNT has actually tried to weaken the postal service in the past, in particular by persuading the EU to launch an investigation into government loans to the Royal Mail in 2007, which TNT argued were illegal subsidies.

Oh, and in its current annual report TNT lists as one of its "barriers to competition" the "generally binding" minimum wage. This should go down well with the unions.

CALLED TO ORDURE

Libel fee-for-all

ONE of Carter-Fuck & Co's finest, along with three other defamation solicitors, appeared before the Commons culture committee – and duly heard libel case fees described as "extortionate", "phenomenal" and "a racket", likely to have "a chilling effect" on freedom of speech.

MPs were told that typical fees from claimants' lawyers in libel actions come to £600 an hour, rising beyond £1,000 an hour when top-ups, tax and "100 percent uplifts" were taken into consideration. When this was put to Carter-Fuck partner Mark Thomson (whose clients include Naomi Campbell, Marco Pierre White and Caprice, and whose company also works for Commons Speaker Michael Martin), he adopted a hurt expression and said that his company's fees were a mere £400 an hour (but £500 when acting for Tesco – see *Eye* 1223).

Tory MP Nigel Evans, voice dripping with scorn: "You're having a sale!" Committee chairman John Whittingdale (Con, Maldon) noted that £400 an hour soon rose when things such as success fees and other premiums were added. Thomson promptly changed the subject; but a smug git called Jonathan Coad from Swan Turton Solicitors later claimed that newspapers were rich enough to be able to afford big payouts.

The event was the first in a series of hearings Whittingdale's committee is holding into press standards, privacy and libel. A couple of New Labour women, Rosemary McKenna (Cumbernauld) and Janet Anderson (Rossendale) were scornful of press standards, McKenna in particular raising her eyes and huffing about journalists. During evidence from pro-newspaper lawyers, McKenna played with her palm-held computer and distractedly brushed the lint off her clothes. When Carter-Fuck and Co were spouting forth, au contraire, she spent much of the time nodding vigorously and primly biting her lower lip.

"Conditional fee agreements" (CFAs) for libel lawyers came under scrutiny, the pro-press briefs arguing that these no-win-no-fee set-ups have sent settlements into the stratosphere. Regional newspapers no longer bother to defend cases, even if convinced the articles were right, because they fear being put out of business by scandalously high legal fees.

Ex-hack Paul Farrelly (Lab, Newcastle-under-Lyne) observed that in the recent Tesco v. *Guardian* libel case (in which the "every little helps" supermarket bully won £5,000 damages), costs came to £800,000. Farrelly said the system was "ripe for abuse by large corporations hoping to have a chilling effect on the media".

Carter-Fuck advised Tesco in that case. Thomson, a Rod Liddle lookalike who mumbled at such low volume he could barely be heard in the public seats, whispered that he was prevented from commenting on the Tesco case costs by "a confidentiality agreement". Mind your own business, parliament!

Thomson, who rested his chin on one hand and spent much of the time jiggling his right leg up and down, claimed that there had been "no significant change" in case statistics since no-win-no-fee was invented. He argued that "press standards have dropped" and that the whole point of CFAs was to make justice affordable for the poor. This despite earlier evidence that no-win-no-fee litigants have recently included such well-known paupers as Premier League footballers, Cherie Blair, Roman Polanski and Sharon Stone.

Philip Davies (Con, Shipley) wondered how fees of £600 an hour squared with the idea of access to justice. A dull little man from libel lawyers Russell, Jones & Walker claimed he and his colleagues had to make "a very considerable investment" in libel actions but disclosed that lawyers will often only take on no-win-no-fee cases when they are confident of winning. Davies: "That's a good racket, isn't it? Take it on conditional fee agreement and double yer income! Nice work if you can get it!"

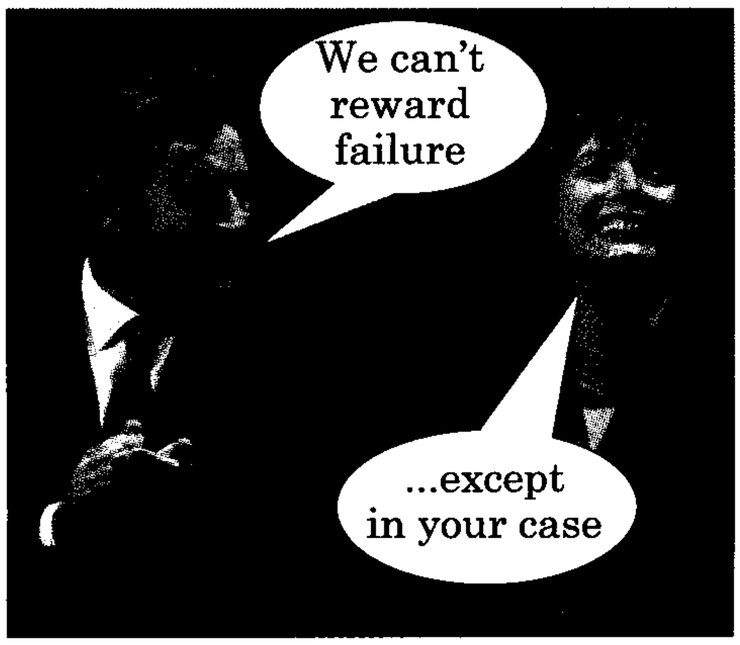
A beard from Schillings, who when not stroking his chin spent much time rotating his thumbs, allowed himself a narrow smile. But the smugness disappeared when Davies barked that "something must be wrong if a newspaper is settling a case simply because it might put it out of business. Surely that is not justice." The beard, name of Rod Christie-Miller, was stung by this and vented sudden bile about press standards, claiming that "the media are being less careful" than ever, citing the *News of the Screws* v. Max Mosley. "I feel quite strongly about this," he snapped.

Whittingdale suggested that no-win-no-fee made defamation lawyers "the libel equivalent of ambulance chasers". The beard from Schillings, said that the alternative was "a defamers' charter" and that it was "a sad day for investigative journalism if a story wasn't true".

Wrong stories are obviously to be regretted. But might inaccuracy not just as easily be caused by powerful interests hiding the truth, confident that libel and privacy laws, as created by the judiciary thanks to a weak parliament, will work to their benefit?

'Gavel Basher'

BANKER ROW SPLITS LABOUR



MORE repercussions over Gordon Brown's rigid formula for determining rent rises for England's 4m council and housing association tenants this April, which are still pegged to last September's retail price index even though inflation is tumbling.

As *Eye* 1229 reported, last September's RPI hit 5 percent. This leaves tenants facing increases of 6 percent or more next month, by when RPI inflation could well have fallen below zero.

Housing minister Margaret Beckett has said she will do what she can after the prospect of the rent rise sparked anger across England and questions in parliament from Labour backbenchers. But the yo-yoing inflation rate could leave her facing another problem later this year. Current forecasts are that by September, RPI inflation could be -2 percent. That would trigger a 1.5 percent fall in rental income for housing associations, as their rents rise according to a formula of RPI plus 0.5 percent. With many associations already nursing losses because of the housing market slump, that could be enough to trigger a series of bail-outs in the sector.

ASKED about the parliamentary standards commissioner's investigation into home secretary Jacqui Smith's second home expenses on the BBC's *Question Time*, work and pensions minister Tony McNulty called for restraint. "Let's not really hang people out to dry before they have had their day in court," he said.

He is presumably unrelated to the Tony McNulty who, working alongside Ms Smith at the Home Office last year, was the strongest and most passionate advocate of the government's plans to extend the period suspects could be held without charge to 42 days.

TALE OF TWO CITIES

"Over the 10 years that I have had the privilege of addressing you as chancellor, I have been able year by year to record how the City of London has risen by your efforts, ingenuity and creativity to become a new world leader... "

– ***Gordon Brown**, speaking to the City of London a week before becoming prime minister, 20 June 2007.*

"We want to ensure that the new banking system that emerges over the coming years… becomes the servant of our economy and society, never its master."

– ***Gordon Brown** explaining how bankers need to be reined in, 22 February 2009.*

BRUSSELS SPROUTS

HAS the latest Brussels-led Eurostars project run completely off the rails?

The scheme – not to be confused with the train – was set up to help small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Though it receives millions in government funds, no UK government department seems aware it exists.

The project is linked to the EU's research and development programme, Eureka, which received a further €100m from the Council of Ministers last August. Despite this, neither the Department for Innovation, Universities, and Skills (DIUS) nor the Department of Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) or even the UK's private Business Link – set up specifically to help SMEs – had heard of either Eurostars or Eureka.

In fact when a BERR official googled Eureka, he complained that the website was so old it cited the old Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) instead of BERR, although Eureka has paid out millions to help advance technological know-how (one unconfirmed report cites a figure of €26bn).

A Treasury official was equally in the dark when asked about the scheme, saying: "What is that?" and referring the *Eye* back to DIUS or BERR and the European commission's London office, whose research department had never heard of Eurostars either!

After a series of fruitless phone calls, UK Eureka co-ordinator Pete Munday confirmed that the project was indeed government-funded via the Treasury and the DIUS, and would soon be receiving another £10m or so of UK government money for the next lot of projects.

I have no sense of irony whatsoever

He dismissed criticism that highly sensitive technological data had been lost by collapsing websites and failing firewalls and said: "Don't worry, the entire Eureka site is being redesigned."

Phew! The gravy train can get back on track again.

WHO OWNS WHOM

BARCLAYS might be one British bank desperate to avoid conceding control to the Treasury, but it's more than happy to do things the other way and buy *into* the Treasury.

The department's elegant offices at 1, Horseguards Road were sold in 2002 to a company called Exchequer Partnerships, a joint venture between Catalyst and Infrastructure Investors, under a 35-year PFI deal.

Last month Infrastructure Investors was bought up entirely by its shareholder, Barclays Private Equity, generating multi-million pound gains for departing investors Société Générale and private equity group 3i on the back of the Treasury deal and scores of other PFI projects. The upshot is that the notorious tax-avoiding Barclays' funds now own, er, half of the UK Treasury!

In an even more topsy-turvy move, Catalyst, the other half-owner, is itself jointly owned by HBOS and builder Bovis. HBOS thus owns 25 percent of the Treasury building. But as British taxpayers now own 42 percent of HBOS, the public has at least got 10.5 percent of the Treasury back!

WHICH DOCTORS?

READER Kevin Morris (Letters, *Eye* 1230) says we should lay off the snake-oil salesmen of alternative medicine. "I'll stick with my homeopath!" he cries, after asserting that conventional drugs can often be fraudulently promoted.

So they can. But it's hard to resist getting your teeth into "therapists" who denounce drugs that can bring respite to Aids victims, offer them provably ineffective remedies instead, feed the conspiracy theories of corrupt African elites and then threaten critics with Mr Justice Eady.

One such is Jeremy Sherr, a grandly titled Fellow of the Society of Homeopaths, who has taken his homeopathic treatments to Aids sufferers in Tanzania. "This is not a conventional charity programme," he told supporters. "This is a homoeopathic programme that includes removing obstacles to cure. It will not cost a lot, and it will make a big difference."

Strip away the gobbledegook, and the active ingredient of homeopathic "remedies" is – er – water. A course of H_2O will not treat Aids, nor will the diets Sherr recommends. While prescribing both, homeopaths keep patients away from the treatment which helps sufferers – anti-retroviral drugs.

Sherr is not alone in testing his ideas on Africans. The Society of Homeopaths has promoted the work of one Hilary Fairclough in Botswana. Her treatments have not been endorsed by double-blind trials, but they have won the approval of no less a medical authority than Jeanette Winterson. She declared that she takes Fairclough's massively diluted snake potion whenever "I have a temperature of 102, spots on my throat, delirium, and a book to finish writing" and – eureka! – "four hours later I have no symptoms whatsoever". Aids victims, however, have slightly more serious symptoms than novelists with writers' block and a high temperature.

Lawyers told the *Eye* Sherr had threatened to sue critics of his African programme for libel. Although the threat was withdrawn, it followed a pattern of alternative therapists using Britain's draconian laws to stop awkward questions.

Simon Singh, one of Britain's most distinguished science writers, is being sued by the British Chiropractic Association for dismissing their therapy as largely worthless (*Eye* 1225). Despite the threat of financial ruin, he is fighting it, but until the case is settled other science writers will back away from criticising the back-thumpers.

More seriously, Matthias Rath sued the *Guardian* and its science writer Ben Goldacre for attacking his claims that vitamin pills were a miracle cure for Aids. The German entrepreneur set himself up in South Africa in 2004. He ran newspaper adverts condemning the pharmaceutical industry for producing "toxic" anti-retroviral drugs, and claimed that his "natural remedies" were much more effective. In 2005, Rath marketed VitaCell to people with Aids in Khayelitsha, a township outside Cape Town. He claimed that participants were suffering from advanced Aids and that none was on or had been on anti-retroviral drugs. Some died, however, and relatives have given statements claiming that some of them had been on ARVs but were told to stop using them.

Although he was eventually forced to stop, Rath had the support of powerful figures in the African National Congress who were happy to believe that white pharmaceutical companies were stealing money from black Africa. "Never before in the history of mankind was a greater crime committed than the genocide organised by the pharmaceutical companies," Rath told them.

Rath abandoned his action in September 2008, and had to pay the *Guardian*'s legal costs, which reportedly ran to £500,000. For the 16 months up to the collapse of the case, however, writers backed away from exposing a false hope being offered to poor patients. Kevin Morris may want to stick with his homeopath, but the peoples of Africa deserve something better.

● *A threat to academic freedom, p25*

'Ratbiter'

TYRANT WATCH

ONE silver lining in the clouds of economic gloom: "Tyrants-R-Us", aka the British Helsinki Human Rights Group, seems to be going the way of Lehman Brothers and Woolies.

The charity, not to be confused with the British Helsinki Subcommittee, has carved out a unique niche in the human rights world by saluting some of the world's more brutal thugs. Its fruitcake-in-chief, John Laughland, made a name for himself as a champion of Saddam Hussein and Slobodan Milosevic. Fellow groupie Christine Stone, wife of historian Norman Stone, has defended the kindly Robert Mugabe against slanderous suggestions that he's a mad autocrat.

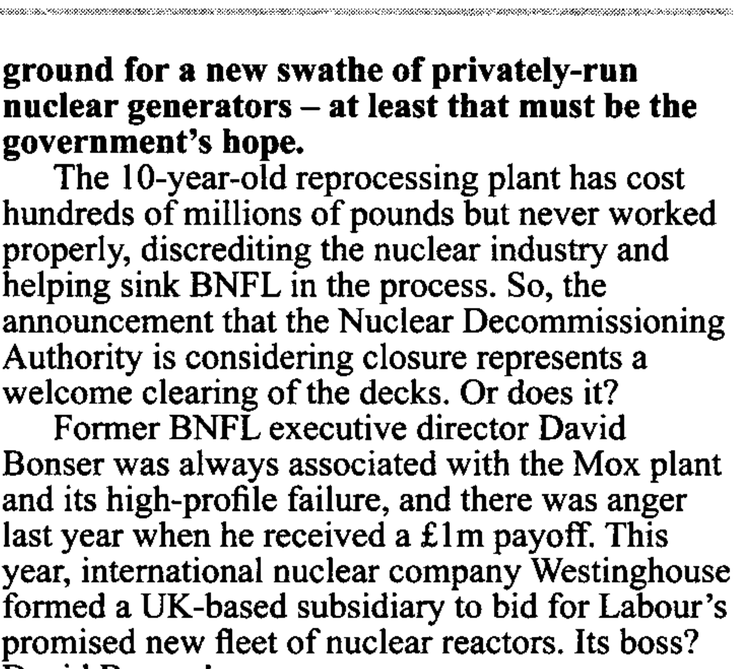
Laughland's finest hour, perhaps, was when he wrote a series of pieces in the *Spectator* in 1999 denying that Milosevic's Serb forces had massacred ethnic Albanians in Kosovo, despite all the evidence to the contrary. Last week's convictions of five top Serbs at the Hague, thanks to the evidence of the cover-up of mass killing which included a Milosevic aide noting in his war diary "no corpse, no crime", strangely met with no response from the BHHRG.

Why so? As recently as 2005 the group had annual income of £113,000 (of which it spent only £56,000). The Charity Commission still hasn't received its 2007 accounts, which are now eight months overdue, but did recently get a brief annual return. It shows that last year Tyrants-R-Us had outgoings of £31,983 and a total income of, er, £14. Can pleas for a government bail-out be far behind?

THE coming closure of the Mox nuclear-reprocessing plant at Sellafield promises the end of a long, failed chapter in Britain's publicly-owned atomic industry, readying the ground for a new swathe of privately-run nuclear generators – at least that must be the government's hope.

The 10-year-old reprocessing plant has cost hundreds of millions of pounds but never worked properly, discrediting the nuclear industry and helping sink BNFL in the process. So, the announcement that the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority is considering closure represents a welcome clearing of the decks. Or does it?

Former BNFL executive director David Bonser was always associated with the Mox plant and its high-profile failure, and there was anger last year when he received a £1m payoff. This year, international nuclear company Westinghouse formed a UK-based subsidiary to bid for Labour's promised new fleet of nuclear reactors. Its boss? David Bonser!



"We're only 45 cabinet minutes away from disaster"

EYE TV

Margaret (BBC2)

LAST year, the BBC screened *The Long Walk to Finchley*, a drama-doc about the young Margaret Thatcher which included a sub-plot suggesting that the tension between the lady and Edward Heath resulted from his unrequited sexual passion for her.

Following this remarkable example of political magical realism, viewers inevitably speculated about the potential revelations in **Margaret**, a companion project catching up with Thatch in the days around her removal from Number Ten.

Would the late Peter Morrison, the unhappy alcoholic bachelor who ran her disastrous campaign against Michael Heseltine's insurgency, be depicted going home for a glass of mineral water with his wife and children? Might Norman Tebbit be exposed as a closet socialist whose hard-right public utterances were a desperate attempt to disguise his soppy concern for the unemployed and poor?

Not quite. But the drama did conclude that Britain's first woman prime minister was removed from office not because she introduced a hugely unpopular replacement for local rates and became progressively more barking under the cares of office, but instead because a group of spineless and whingeing men failed to realise she was a sex-bomb with an icily logical mind who was sure to return a fourth Tory victory at the next election.

In advance of transmission, the *Torygraph* and others had grown exercised about the fact that the actress in the lead role, Lindsay Duncan, had admitted to being a Thatcher-hating lefty. But the smart money was always that this Maggie-ography would end up closer to hagiography: both because of post-Hutton BBC caution (and a craven pay-out to Lady Forkbender over a Harold Wilson film) and because, outside of the sort of satirical agitprop plays that used to tour car plants in the 70s, actors have a natural tendency to bat for their character.

In the most notorious case, Dame Helen Mirren was a committed republican until she got to play Brenda on the big screen; now she waves from cars with a rotating wrist and is rarely seen without small dogs yapping at her heels. And Duncan, too, unequivocally makes her character the heroine of the piece, largely through the strategy of not portraying Thatcher much at all – beyond the blue suits and occasional terrifying bark in the voice – but delivering a depiction of Elizabeth I instead.

Majestically powerful as she swoops on useless men plotting in dark corridors, Duncan often so resembles Cate Blanchett in *Elizabeth* that it's often a surprise that Tebbit and Ken Clarke aren't wearing ruffs.

Bizarrely, Duncan doesn't attempt the throatily lisping voice at all, which is a pity because some of the supporting performances achieve a remarkable degree of photographic and phonographic precision. John Sessions, should he ever wish to, could probably get into bed beside Geoffrey Howe's wife without being rumbled, and Ian McDiarmid's Sir Denis is uncannily accurate while creating a character rather than a Dear Bill caricature.

Perhaps the only hint in the production of the BBC pinko tendencies against which the original Denis liked to rail is that the drama shows Margaret drinking far more than her husband, although there is never any suggestion that the alcohol affected her adversely, which chimes with the memoirs of her colleagues.

Some other members of the cast are so unlike the people they're supposed to be that there would be a case for wearing the names on the back of their shirts like footballers. It's only when the one you've assumed to be a minor Treasury official threatens to resign as chancellor that you realise he's Nigel Lawson.

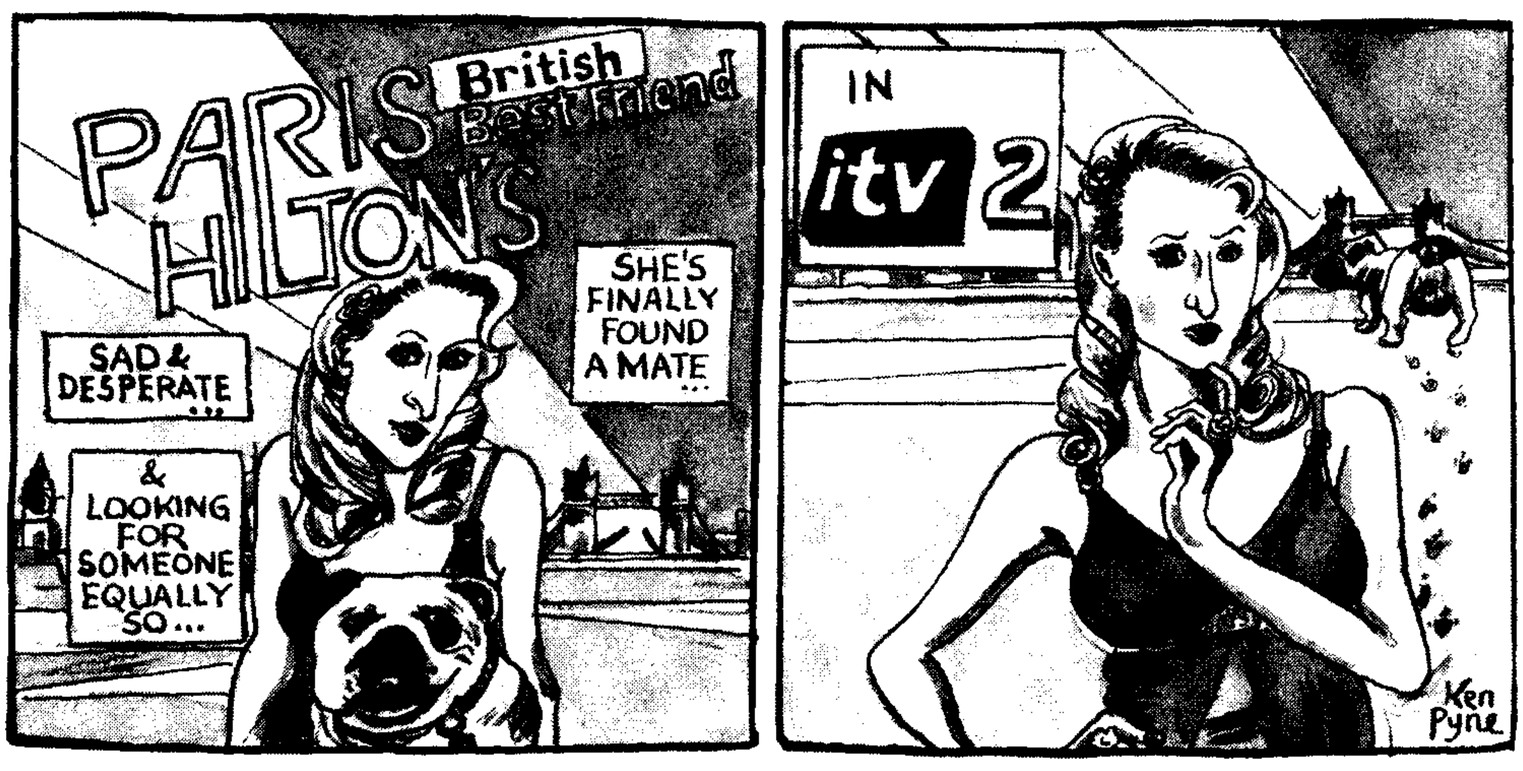
But the overall result is a highly enjoyable pantomime for the politically interested, although there are the usual problems with faction. Scriptwriter Richard Cottan gives Margaret the Virgin Queen a fantastic rant on the eve of execution about the cowardice of her colleagues and her plan to continue as prime minister without actually being Conservative party leader. It's great TV, but did she actually say it?

Britain's draconian libel laws and the BBC's prissy internal guidelines also clearly leave their mark on the script. Scenes between the late Peter Morrison and Alan Clark, lifted almost verbatim from Clark's juicy diaries, have a swagger and malice that entirely disappears in conversations that include John Major, Heseltine or any other big Tory beast who might get lawyers or the *Torygraph* interested in how they have been portrayed. The Major sub-plot, for example, dramatises tantalising facts – his convenient disappearance for dental surgery, a long delay in signing Thatcher's nomination papers – without being able to examine a possible motive in the way that a dramatist dealing with a fictional character would.

As it happens, the Thatcher coup has already been brilliantly dramatised on television once: in *House of Cards*, the Andrew Davies version of the Michael Dobbs book that had the remarkable fortune to be scheduled in the week that she left office. Ian Richardson's Francis Urquhart beautifully caught the lunacies and ambitions afflicting the Tories at the time.

But this later attempt is good fun, although it would have been better if Duncan could have been persuaded to play Thatcher.

'Remote Controller'



MEDIA NEWS

SINCE the Ross/Brand row, the BBC has extended form-filling and box-ticking over compliance to ludicrous lengths, and none more ludicrous than the latest example from one of Ross's outlets, Radio 2.

Neil Gardner at Ladbroke Productions, one of the main independent radio production houses, was recently asked to re-do a compliance form for a series after R2 bureaucrats decided he hadn't given serious consideration to issues of child abuse and violence in the programmes, and whether these could cause offence.

What could provoke such alarm? A recording – not even a dramatisation, but a straight reading by David Warner – of Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist*.

THE BBC has redefined the terms of its "generous" relocation packages for staff being forced to move to their new Salford studios.

Offering "More Choice, Less Cash Up Front", it still guarantees that licence-payers will cough up 85 percent of their house value when they move, which is generous in the current slump. Or they could enjoy a lump sum equivalent to 10 percent of their salary if they sell their house themselves. Equally attractive is the news that "for up to two years, the BBC will pay (taxable) expenses of up to £1,900 a month to cover rent of a property in the North, utility bills and a weekly return journey to London".

But there's a catch in the small print. "Those who sign up waive any redundancy rights they have in relation to their London role." This is a pretty big catch, especially when the BBC itself admits it is constantly renewing its redundancy targets, in part to save the money it is lavishing on its move to Salford and on "generous" schemes like this.

"THE BBC's commitment to accuracy is a core editorial value", says the BBC Guidelines bible. Except when reporting football matches, it seems.

It is routine, particularly for regional news and sport programmes, to exaggerate the size of crowds by the clumsy use of audio dubbing, designed to give the impression that a larger number of people give a toss about the footie than is the case.

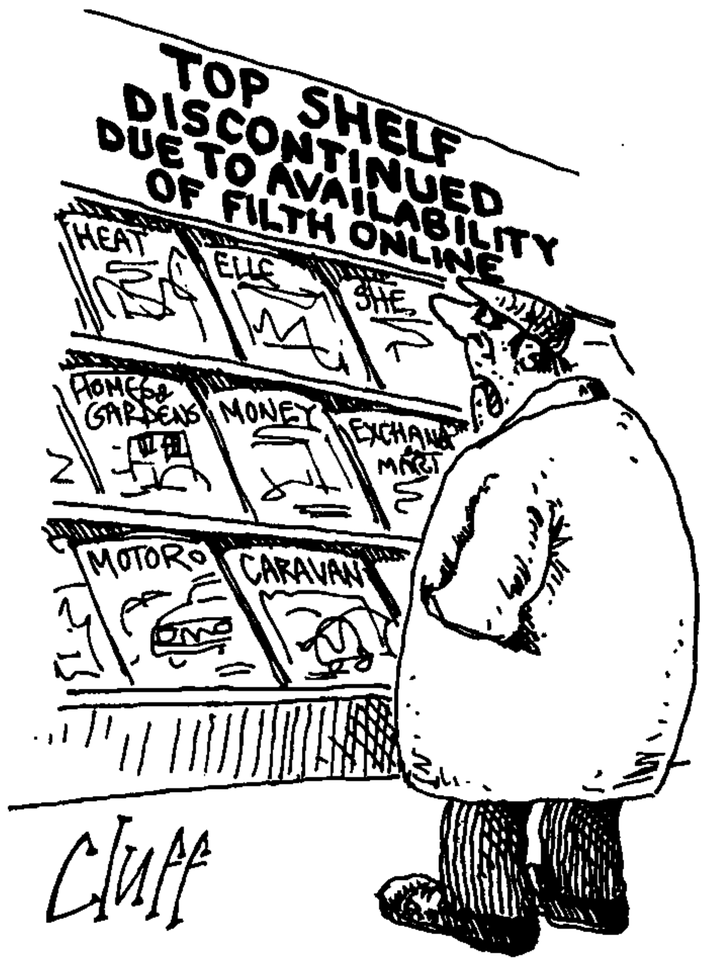
A match last month between Swindon and Scunthorpe, which attracted a few dozen fans, was given an audio track by BBC South that added the roar of a capacity crowd to pictures of an almost empty ground.

On the same day, the very same "large crowd cheering wildly" library clip was also pasted on to a sparsely attended Southampton-Preston tie, a Reading-Bristol City game and matches between Chesterfield and Bournemouth, Morecambe and Aldershot and a Millwall-Brighton tie which featured stands full of... empty seats!

DUMB BRITAIN

The Weakest Link (BBC1)

Anne Robinson: Name the 13th state of the USA to join the Union. It was named after a British king.
Contestant: Texas.
AR: Which P is the smallest native British bat?
Contestant: Pigeon.
AR: The garden at Gethsemane in Jerusalem is at the foot of the Mount of... what?
Contestant: Everest.
AR: If something in dispute is divided equally, it is referred to as splitting the... what?
Contestant: Atom.



HOW THE BBC WORKS

Sent: 11 February 2009, 14:11
To: NHU [*Natural History Unit*] Researchers; NHU APs; NHU PCs
Subject: Quick school question please

Hi gang,
We're looking for an "inner city" school in Bristol and I was wondering if anyone had any bright ideas of any "really dodgy" ones? I.e. NOT the kind of school that any of you with kids would want to send yours to! Ideally a "lower achieving" one which is very multicultural/diverse in its attendees... It doesn't matter if they are primary or secondary.

Does anyone have any suggestions please?
Many thanks!

Researcher, *Gardeners' World*

Twenty minutes later...
Sent: 11 February 2009 14:38
To: NHU Researchers; NHU PCs ; NHU APs
Subject: Schools – thanks and sorry

Thanks everyone, I have suggestions now and sorry if I worded that email poorly and anyone was offended. To clarify, the idea is to say that even children without much money and from very different backgrounds can work brilliantly together to create a lovely garden – rather than children all from the same type of background and/or those who have rich parents.

GOING LIVE

EAGER to get the latest on the Turkish Airlines plane which crashed near an airport in Amsterdam, the BBC News channel went live to the general manager of the Hilton Hotel "which overlooks Schiphol Airport".

"What can you see?" he is asked.

"I unfortunately cannot see anything from the crash area," he replies.

"So what is the hotel's involvement?"

"The hotel so far is not involved at all."

OH, YEAH? *University Challenge* contestants have to be quick, says journalist Mary Ann Sieghart, a competitor on the "professionals" series of the show. "Often I found I knew the answer to the question but someone else got in a nanosecond earlier. [The viewer] can't tell that has happened. There are some extremely intelligent and knowledgeable people who are just a bit slower."

– BBC News website, 24 February.

BIRTSPEAK 2.0

Director of Digital Engagement, Cabinet Office.
Salary: £81,600 – £160,000

The successful applicant will:

- Develop a strategy and implementation plan for extending digital engagement across Government
- Work with communication, policy and delivery officials in Government departments to embed world class digital engagement in the day-to-day working of Government…
- Introduce new techniques and software for digital engagement, such as 'jams' into Government…

Judgement will be crucial in this role. It leads on the future of Government engagement with citizens through digital means. – *Job advert, "Civil Service Recruitment Gateway" website*

FLYING SPIN DOCTORS

AVIATION industry group FlyingMatters (FM) was pretty piqued at the *Eye*'s refusal to advertise its feeble celeb-spotting campaign in the last issue. Its chairman, former Labour minister Brian Wilson, griped to the media that the *Eye* was suppressing the lobbyists' freedom of speech.

Meanwhile, leaked documents show that FM has been trying to get the All Party Parliamentary Aviation Group to change its name and aims. The group's refusal of an offer to supply it with a secretariat was reported recently in the *Guardian*, but the lobbyists' ambitions to hold sway over the group went far further.

The proposal, "Reinvigorating the All Party Aviation Group", suggested dropping "aviation" from the name and using "air travel" instead, while the new aims were to focus on the "contribution and challenges" of air travel.

The documents also reveal that FM's media strategy is to "position FM as voice of flyer", rather than the voice of big-money aviation – although it doesn't show any sign so far of taking up the many gripes (accessibility, long queues, lost baggage) that said flyers have about the airports and airlines that support FlyingMatters.

MEANWHILE, the *Daily Mail* carried excited claims last week about PR man Roland Rudd, a friend of Mandelson, lobbying the government hard for a Heathrow third runway.

Hacks at the *Daily Telegraph*, meanwhile, were baffled when their editor, thirsty Will Lewis, announced bluntly in editorial conference one day that the paper would be supporting the runway plan.

It seemed to run counter to the readers' sympathies and was out of kilter with other members of the *Torygraph*'s leader-writing circle. But now the hacks are starting to join the dots and realise that Thirsty has long worshipped at the feet of Rudd. Was the Heathrow volte-face an example of Lewis taking dictation from the suave Roland?

AD NAUSEAM

THE Recycle for London campaign features TV ads, bus-sides and radio slots urging you to "starve your bin" and recycle more. The campaign is supported by the London Waste & Recycling Board and… *thelondonpaper*.

Yes, that's right: Rupert Murdoch's daily handout that has helped turn every Tube train and bus into a moving landfill site, now has the gall to tell us what to do with the mountains of waste it has helped create.

McDONALD'S has spent years and hundreds of millions of pounds trying to convince the world it is a caring, environmentally minded corporation whose lattes are fair-trade and whose meat is ethically sourced.

Whoops! Its latest Happy Meal packaging reads "Coming Soon to Your Happy Meal – ENDANGERED ANIMALS." Mmm, two all-Panda patties, special sauce, lettuce, cheese…

ON THE subject of inspired packaging design, supermarket shelves nationwide are graced with the Fabulous Bakin' Boys' Triple Chocolate King Cupcakes.

The suspicion is that a disgruntled creative typeset the boxes, however, as they read "4King Cupcakes". But are the cupcakes 4king delicious?

BRITISH GAS'S latest ad campaign, conceived by advertising agency CHI & Partners, is all about saving the planet. "Look after your world with British Gas" is the slogan; "We're doing our bit to make the world greener," says the TV ad.

Oddly, British Gas's "bit" to make the world greener includes giving all staff a package to commemorate the work of CHI, containing a glossy brochure, three single-sided posters, a cardboard pen holder and a copy of the *Mail*'s recent "35 Ways to Go Green" booklet.

So much for getting rid of unnecessary printing.

CURTAINS FOR HIM

***DAILY Telegraph* diarist Tim Walker doubles up as the theatre critic of the *Sunday Telegraph*. How does he manage it? Er, he doesn't.**

Two weeks ago the dapper diarist achieved a new personal best by not attending a single show: there was no theatre notice in the paper, and no, he was not on his hols. While everybody else went to Leeds to review Lenny Henry in *Othello*, Walker remained in his diary bunker in Buckingham Palace Road – as he did the week before, when he was the only national critic not to review *England People Very Nice* at the National Theatre.

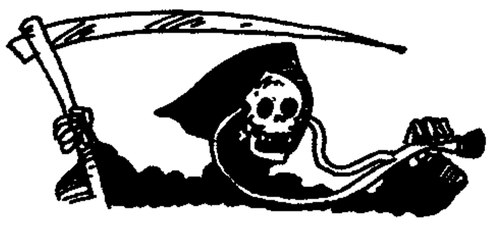
Schools face pinch on there finances

Sheffield Weekly Gazette

SUPERMODELS

KERBER

MEDICINE BALLS



A surgeon rants...

"SUBSTANDARD surgery in independent sector treatment centres (ISTCs – see the last two *Eyes*) has been evident for ages, but the Royal College of Surgeons (RCS) was too scared to rock the boat lest its power be given to the Postgraduate Medical Education and Training Board (PMETB). This has happened anyway, and the RCS is now of largely historical interest, posing pompously but with zero influence.

"The Darzi report claims to be about quality but the ISTCs were purely about numbers. All sorts of surgeons were brought in who would not have passed even slight evaluation against the old standards, but due to European law are allowed to work in the UK. I have just interviewed a young Polish surgeon. He has a European Certificate of Surgical Training (CST) and can come here and work as a specialist, even though he has done the stunning total of seven laparascopic cholecystectomies (keyhole gall bladder removals).

"Meanwhile we have hundreds of good surgeons from India, Pakistan and Egypt who learned surgery from British textbooks and then came here and worked for years in our system. As non-Europeans, they were made to jump through ludicrous hoops to become cannon fodder sub-consultant doctors and many have now been sent home. Yet their expertise is way ahead of the new crop of slightly trained UK surgeons we are about to let loose, and of most trainees from Europe.

"Because of the hours' restrictions of the European working time directive, surgical trainees are no longer around to learn how to operate on rare and unusual cases, and to deal with the complications. The government and our medical 'leaders' are presiding over a serious decline in surgical standards which will have effects much more widespread than the Bristol affair." (*From Andrew McIrvine, consultant surgeon, Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust.*)

Complimentary, for once...

A YEAR-LONG pilot scheme in Northern Ireland found impressive health benefits for patients offered complementary therapies, so why were its findings not released for more than a year?

Seven hundred and thirteen patients with physical and/or mental health conditions were referred to various therapies via nine GP practices in Belfast and Londonderry. Patients assessed their own health pre- and post-therapy. After treatment, 80 percent of patients reported an improvement in their symptoms, 64 percent took less time off work and 55 percent reduced their use of painkillers.

The trial wasn't randomised or controlled, so we don't know how the patients would have fared if given the standard treatment of grumpy nihilism and Ibuprofen. But the fact that so many GPs were won over by the study (99 percent said they would refer patients to the scheme in future and 98 percent said they would recommend the service to other GPs), suggests there might be something in it. The fact that the Northern Ireland health board hasn't released the results in a big fanfare suggests it doesn't have the money to extend the service. Judge for yourself at http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/final_report_from_smr_on_the_cam_pilot_project_-_may_2008.pdf

Smoke without ire

JADE GOODY may be encouraging more women to have cervical smears and HPV vaccinations (if only the NHS could afford them), but a much cheaper way to dramatically reduce your risk of cervical cancer is not to smoke.

The risk is greater the earlier you start and the more you smoke. Twenty a day increases your risk seven fold, 40 a day increases it 14 fold, because the damaged cervical cells can't clear the human papilloma virus. A simple message that not even Max Clifford has thought to mention.

M.D.

ECO-GNOMICS

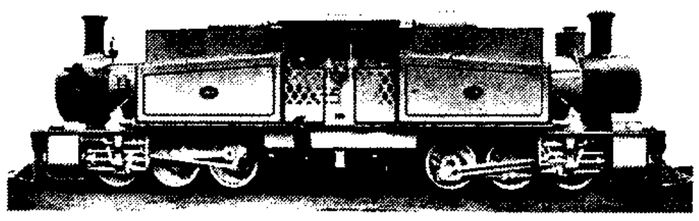
Cashing in on hot air

BRITISH AIRWAYS, which recently announced that it intends to halve its carbon footprint by, er, 2050, has been using its in-flight magazines to puff its "green" credentials – but with limited success.

From flying people thousands of miles to eco-lodges, to promoting carbon offsetting, fleet efficiency and "green travel tips", it seems there's no limit to BA's commitment to tackling climate change. *High Life* readers are even invited to put questions to BA chief executive Willie Walsh, and the green guru will reply via a monthly eco-column.

In February, *Highlife*'s sister publication *Business Life* gave a more accurate picture of BA's strategic commitment to tackling climate change with the announcement that from 29 March BA will be resuming flights to Riyadh and Jeddah in Saudi Arabia, five times a week to both cities. As BA's director of strategy, Robert Boyle, explained: "Resuming these flights makes commercial sense... The oil market is increasingly important globally and inward investment into Saudi Arabia has risen considerably in the last couple of years... we believe our flights will be profitable."

So there you have it: the financial opportunities of buoyant oil trading between Saudi and London are too good to miss out on, even though, by this column's calculation, the new routes will add about 250,000 tons of CO_2 to BA's annual carbon footprint. You can't get greener that that!



SIGNAL FAILURES

Schmoozing on the train

PREPOSTEROUS bonuses for Network Rail directors cause outrage every year. And this year's look set to be no exception after the rash of problems in January on the "modernised" west-coast mainline.

But the perks of privatised rail for senior figures don't stop there. Behind the scenes the Department for Transport's (DafT) director-general of rail, Mike Mitchell, was schmoozed 41 times in 2007, says the recently published register of hospitality for top mandarins.

DafT uses its own murky criteria to award rail franchises. Its insistence on short franchises (*Eye* 1221) means there's always another bidding war in the pipeline, and never a shortage of firms trying to curry favour with the department.

One of Mitchell's junkets in January 2007 was dinner courtesy of **Go-Ahead**. In February **SNCF** (French railways) then took him to supper. In April DafT confirmed Gatwick Express would be taken over by the Southern franchise of Govia, Go-Ahead's joint venture with a firm part-owned by SNCF. In June DafT awarded Govia the franchise for commuter trains into Euston and Birmingham.

In April of the same year Mitchell was treated to dinner by **National Express**, which won the hotly contested east-coast mainline franchise four months later.

Mitchell was then a guest of **Stagecoach** in May, a month before his department revealed that Stagecoach had won the East Midlands franchise (including Midland Mainline).

FirstGroup showed the greatest devotion to Mitchell's palate, treating him to a drinks reception in January, a ball in February and dinner in March and June. These all followed an unprecedented passenger "strike" in January 2007 in protest at overcrowding and delays on First Great Western, the mega-franchise DafT awarded to WorstGroup (despite its record on the previous FGW franchise) soon after Mitchell moved to DafT from, er, WorstGroup (see *Eye* 1150). As the clamour grew in 2007 for FGW's franchise to be scrapped, DafT stood behind WorstGroup. Only in February 2008, after another passenger strike and FGW being caught lying to the government about its performance, did DafT give FGW a "remedial" notice.

Mitchell received "performance tickets" in February 2007 from Canadian train builder **Bombardier**. Learning British customs quickly, newcomer **Hitachi** took Mitchell to a reception the same month. In March 2007 DafT invited bids for up to 2,000 new inter-city carriages. Bombardier took Mitchell to the opera on 2 June and a dinner and "private showing" on 14 June. Two months later, DafT named Bombardier and Hitachi as shortlisted bidders (plus a third bidder which soon withdrew). In November Mitchell enjoyed dinner courtesy of Hitachi. The 2007 register doesn't show if he received any subsequent hospitality from either firm before last month's announcement that DafT's preferred bidder is Hitachi (now classed a "British" firm by spindoctors eager to convince the BBC and public that British money won't be supporting Japanese jobs for Japanese workers).

DafT's rules on accepting hospitality say it "must not give the impression to any member of the public, to any organisation with whom you deal or to your colleagues that you have been, or may have been, influenced by a consideration to show favour or disfavour to any person or organisation". They also state: "You must not accept any hospitality… that would, or might appear to: place you under any obligation to an individual or organisation making the offer; compromise your impartiality." So that's all right then.

THE government's refusal to suspend its fare-rise formula (retail inflation plus 1 percent) was widely reported last week to herald falling rail fares next year. Really?

Southeastern's special formula (3 percent over inflation) will increase regulated fares unless deflation in July exceeds -3 percent. July's deflation must exceed -1 percent for other regulated fares to drop. But the formula means fares wouldn't reduce as much as retail prices generally, and in real terms fares will rise.

Train firms feeling hard done by can raise unregulated "anytime" fares as much as they wish. And if they think regulated "off peak" tickets are too cheap for recession-hit passengers, simply changing the tickets' time restrictions will force more people to shell out for "anytime" tickets.

'Dr B Ching'

ROTTEN BOROUGHS

CARTER FUCKED

MORE on the secret bonuses paid to senior officers at Kent county council, as revealed in the last *Eye*. In 2007-08 the eight-strong "chief officers group" between them received a total of £102,247 on top of their six-figure salaries.

Eye 1230 reported how Tory council leader Paul Carter almost burst a blood vessel after his £250,000 chief exec Peter Gilroy told staff in an email that the top officers would not be collecting any bonuses next year. The average bonus of more than £14,000 a head for the top eight is more than Kent's lowest-paid workers earn in a year.

When the *Kent Messenger* ran a story on the bonuses, the county council refused to name the members of the chief officers group because it would "breach the Data Protection Act". This was balls, given that the county council's own website has a page titled "meet the chief officers" which carries their biographies and photographs. The bonustastic eight are: Peter Gilroy, chief executive; Amanda Honey, md of communities; Keith Abbott, interim joint md of children, families and education; Dr Ian Craig, interim joint md of children, families and education [*another one!*]; Oliver Mills, md of adult services; Mike Austerberry, interim executive director of environment, highways and waste; David Cockburn, executive director of strategy, economic development and ICT; and Lynda McMullan, director of finance.

Trebles all round!

SLIP-UP

NEW FOREST district council is more than £250,000 poorer after spending four years vainly trying to blame a flooring company for its dangerously slippery sports halls.

Over three days the high court heard how sports halls at Applemore, Ringwood and Totton became lethal and had to be closed months after they were sealed by the Titanium Polyurethane Seal Company (TPS) of Cheltenham in 2004. TPS redid the job, but the problem recurred. When TPS came back a third time it found that the council had not passed on the correct instructions to its cleaners, who were using the wrong sort of goo to polish the floors. The council nevertheless insisted TPS's products were "not fit for purpose" and accused the company of bad workmanship. TPS eventually sued the council because its business was suffering.

Judge David Wilcox found overwhelmingly in the company's favour and said the problems were 100 percent the council's responsibility, caused by its "neglect" to follow TPS's advice. The council was ordered to pay TPS £234,823; it is coy about revealing its whopping legal bill.

Tory council leader Barry Rickman, who took the decision to fight the case rather than settle with the wronged company, said "lessons have been learned". He was not going to "point the finger at anybody", he declared, shortly before falling with a thump on his arse.

● ***EYE* reader Matt Taylor wasn't surprised to find a sodden cardboard box full of leaflets dumped in a street near his home – he lives, after all, in the London borough of Waltham Forest. But there was a certain irony in the fact that the leaflets were promoting the borough's campaign against, er, litter and fly-tipping. "We're wiping out enviro-crime," the leaflets boasted.**

Like all *Eye* readers, Mr Taylor is a public-spirited sort, so he rang the council to tell them of his find. The leaflets *hadn't* been dumped, he was told – they were being "stored" on the pavement in Edinburgh Road prior to being distributed through letter boxes. Er, right.

A week later Mr Taylor was walking down Edinburgh Road again and found the leaflets were now being "stored" underneath a hedge, along with a load of old plastic bags, drinks cans and crisp packets. The next day the leaflets had gone – although the Labour council's crack team of enviro-crime fighters had left the rest of the crap where it was.

Before the "clean-up"

And after...

PLANET OF THE APES

MORE ON Go Ape, the company that transforms boring old woodland in Britain's parks into fun aerial assault courses (*Eye* 1214).

At Rivington, near Bolton, approval for a Go Ape site in Lever Park, gifted to the public 100 years ago by eccentric soap magnate Lord Leverhulme, was passed last year by Chorley borough council in clear breach of its own planning rules.

The scheme was passed under "delegated powers" even though the size of the site – 3.2 hectares – should have required a full planning committee meeting. When locals threatened to take the matter to the local government ombudsman, council chief exec Donna Hall decreed that the site in fact measured less than a hectare and therefore hadn't needed a full meeting. This new figure was reached by only including the bits that touched the ground – leaving out hundreds of metres of cables and zip-wires in the trees!

Just three trees were initially slated for destruction in the original application. Thirteen more turned out to be "diseased" when inspected, and yet more disappeared along the line of the zip-wires. Not to worry. A "wildlife hedge" will supposedly replace some biodiversity. Go Ape's ecologist interestingly claims that "breeding birds are not affected by people in trees". And anyhow, the new development will barely be noticed since, according to the supporting letter to the planning committee from landowners United Utilities, it will provide no significant increase in visitors. Funny, then, that the car park was the first thing to be built.

PS: Not everyone hates Go Ape. Managers from Royal Bank of Scotland, for example, have been enjoying "team-building" exercises at Go Ape sites in Scotland. Any suggestion that, given the bank's recent performance, RBS managers should be hanging from trees rather than merrily swinging through them, would be in very poor taste...

● *Is your park under threat? Tell the* Eye.

BOOMING HECK

AS THE recession loomed, Rochdale council had a brilliant idea to fix the town's economic problems: move the bus station 12 yards, build a new one for £12m and call it a "transport interchange". Central to the plan was a £250m town centre redevelopment and a new tram link to Manchester.

Alas, Rochdale Development Agency (RDA), having bought and demolished a swathe of iconic Victorian buildings, has so far failed to convince anyone that "Rochdale is booming" – not least Manchester, which has decided not to extend its Metrolink tram there after all.

Meanwhile, the wheels seem to be falling off the town centre redevelopment. In January 2008, John Hudson, chief executive of RDA, praised its public consultation process. "We are delighted," he declared, "by the responses we have had for the developers' proposals." Alan Black, of planning consultants DTZ, said its work was "one of the most thorough and robust developer selection competitions I have been involved in". No mean feat, given that only 130 people in a town of 200,000 bothered to comment on the "exciting" plans. Rochdale now has to rerun the entire tendering process at a cost of £200,000.

Roll on the new "transport interchange". At least when it's built people will be able to leave more quickly!

LAST GASP

TAMESIDE council has launched a stop-smoking campaign with the local NHS trust to reduce smoking-related deaths in the borough, currently 458 a year – about nine a week.

The campaign is endorsed by the council's cabinet member for health, Labour councillor Brenda Warrington. The *Eye* asked her how she reconciled this with her previous statements about smoking... Such as that a smoking ban in pubs would be "the thin end of a wedge" that would "end in a Draconian smoking ban" (2004); that the government should "immediately reduce or at least freeze" duty on tobacco (November 2004) and that "the health issue appears to be a red herring... what matters... is that people's jobs are at risk" (2000).

Until 2006 Cllr Warrington chaired the Tobacco Workers Alliance, a trade union grouping representing around 7,000 people employed in the industry, lobbying MPs and issuing press releases arguing against further restrictions on people's freedom to kill themselves. The TWA was eventually wound up.

Cllr Warrington told the *Eye* she had no conflict of interest because the TWA no longer existed. In any case, "it never promoted smoking, it was simply giving a voice to the people who worked in the tobacco industry". There was "no argument" that smoking was harmful, she said, but people should be able to make "informed choices" about whether to smoke. Which sounds very much like the line still promoted by the cigarette manufacturers, but there you are. Cough, splutter...

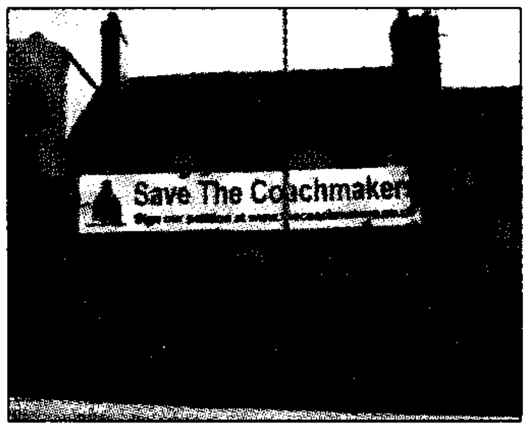
IT'S GRIM UP NORTH LONDON KNIFE & PACKER

LOTTE'S SEVENTH BIRTHDAY HAS BEEN AMAZING! REFRESHING CHAT, TRADITIONAL GAMES...
AND LITTLE DO THE KIDS KNOW, THE BEST IS YET TO COME...
ORGANISING THE PARTY BAGS WAS A PLEASURE AND A CHALLENGE
MUM, WHAT'S A "FENNEL PEELER"?
AND WHAT'S AN "EMERGENCY REFLEXOLOGY KIT" FOR?

NOOKS and CORNERS

HANLEY is one of the Six Towns that make up Stoke-on-Trent. Although it is the real centre of Stoke, boasting the Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, it is, like the other five towns, an amorphous place, cut up by roads and full of dereliction. It badly needs regeneration – especially after the collapse of the pottery industry – but these days "regeneration" only seems to mean destruction.

The Housing Market Renewal programme, aka Pathfinder, pursued by English Partnerships, "The National Regeneration Agency" and promoted by John Prescott, has meant the gratuitous demolition of great swathes of sound Victorian terraced housing (*Eyes passim*). The "regeneration" of Hackney demanded by the imposition of the 2012 Olympic Games, has meant the destruction of many local businesses and much housing; the only real beneficiaries being (as usual) large building contractors, developers and architects. The same will be true of Hanley.



Two years ago the North Staffordshire Regeneration Partnership was set up by Stoke-on-Trent city council and other local authorities and "stakeholders". This agency hopes to pump £1bn into Stoke. £120m will go into building new office space to create a business district in Hanley; and many more millions will go to rebuild the existing East West Centre, a tawdry shopping development. This £250m redevelopment by Realis Estates, formerly Highland Hanley, and its architects, the international firm Benoy, which gave us Bluewater (mission statement: "To create successful destinations that delight and engage") envisages "a new department store, a wide range of shops, cafés, restaurants, vibrant public spaces, a multi-screen cinema, an hotel, a modern bus facility and improved parking". Unfortunately it also involves destroying the surviving fragments of old Hanley that stand on the site.

These include the terrace on the north side of Lichfield Street that contains the Coachmakers Arms pub. This will be replaced by a multi-storey car park, while the existing car park on the south side of the street will become the new bus station. English Heritage reported that "these buildings constitute a lively and interesting group, in generally good condition and mainly in use. Many of the buildings retain a high level of historic detail."

The Coachmakers Arms is a jolly early 19th century building which was made into a beer house in the 1860s. It is popular and was declared Staffordshire Pub of the Year in 2007 by CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale. Even Stoke-on-Trent's "Regeneration Directorate" notes that it is "one of only 14 pubs in Staffordshire retaining a 19th-century beer-house type floorplan and that its extant historical and architectural features warranted the preservation of the building, as a functioning public house, within any development scheme".

Of course, any competent architect could incorporate The Coachmakers Arms and its neighbours into a modern civilised urban development, but the task is evidently beyond, or beyond the brief anyway, of the developer's award-winning architects Benoy. It's not as if conservation is entirely unknown in Hanley. Close by, in front of the museum, is the Bethesda Methodist Chapel – the "Cathedral of the Potteries" – which, after years of neglect, is being restored by the Historic Chapels Trust and local supporters (and a mere £600,000 is needed to complete the work), which suggests the ordinary people of Hanley, rather than all the regeneration executives, would quite like interesting and useful old parts of their town to be retained.

Despite a 10,000-name petition against demolition collected by the Save the Coachmakers Arms Campaign, supported by the local MP Mark Fisher, Stoke-on-Trent city council granted outline planning permission for the East West redevelopment scheme last month. The fight for the pub goes on, however, and it must be uncertain whether Realis Estates can realise its "regeneration project". In Hanley, as elsewhere, the dark cloud of the credit crunch may have many silver linings.

ANOTHER overweening scheme which we must all hope will be cancelled is that for developing the derelict but highly sensitive "Jolly Boatman" site in front of Hampton Court Station – directly across the Thames from Hampton Court Palace.

The development by the Gladedale Group in conjunction with Network Rail is 20 times as large as the existing station building and will include flats, an hotel, an underground car-park (in a flood-risk area) and new accommodation for the Royal Star & Garter Home to enable that charity to abandon and sell its existing magnificent building at Richmond (*Eye* 1230 – see Letters, page 14). The scheme has been vigorously opposed by Historic Royal Palaces and the local Hampton Court Rescue Campaign.

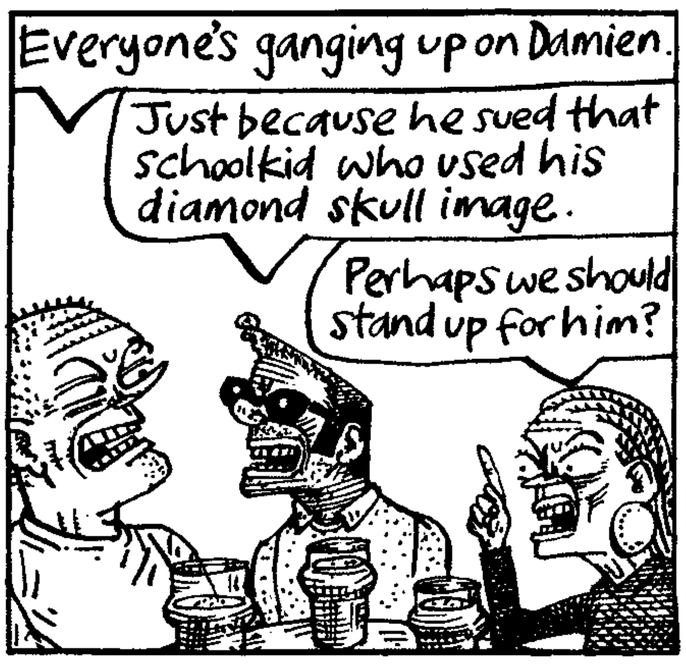
The prominent four-storey hotel is now to be the work of Quinlan Terry, who has demonstrated his usual ineptitude by designing a building which (unlike William Tite's 1849 station) fails to address the Tudor palace and presents to the Thames an oblique front like a row of mean Georgian terraced houses rather than a coherent composition. Yet the useless minister, Hazel Blears, declined to call in the scheme for public inquiry, claiming it was a local issue, and it has now been passed by the Conservative majority on Elmbridge council, who have allowed the developer to offer only 11 percent of affordable housing rather than the statutory 40 percent.

The historian David Starkey has described this decision as not only "a national scandal, but an international scandal", and he is right.

'Piloti'

YOUNG BRITISH ARTISTS

BY BIRCH


Everyone's ganging up on Damien.
Just because he sued that schoolkid who used his diamond skull image.
Perhaps we should stand up for him?

I-SPY *Salisbury*

Submitted by Rev. Richard Cole. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs)*

MUSIC & MUSICIANS

THERE WAS little for music lovers to cheer when BBC director-general Mark Thompson announced plans to strengthen the corporation's involvement with the arts.

True, the promised upgrading of arts coverage in news programmes was long overdue; and the appointment of an overall arts editor for news services means programmes like Radio 4's *Today* may start running serious music stories as opposed to the simplistic fodder they bung into the mix at present.

But there was nothing specific to raise the hopes of anyone who wants more classical music on TV – even though Thompson acknowledged that 12m people watched last year's Proms: a decent figure given that it excludes the Last Night coverage and was basically on BBC4.

As for music on radio, all Thompson did was tell us how lucky we are already. But Radio 3 badly needs a shot in the arm, and Radio 4 needs to stop placing its music programmes in the hands of off-the-shelf celebrities. If Thompson really wants to get his music audiences dancing in the streets, he'll need to come up with significant proposals, not just self-congratulation.

THE National Museum of Wales's desperation to be noticed reached absurd levels last month when it staged a 75-minute piece of music described as "the first ever performance of the sounds of the Neanderthals".

Of course the whole thing was tosh, written by an obscure Welsh composer called Simon Thorne, who has no more information on prehistoric musical life than anyone else. One only hopes Welsh taxpayers who paid for this nonsense – much of which sounds like someone being sick in a bathroom – either see the joke or are happy to be taken in by an "insight into the way Neanderthals depended on the emotional life of song".

For those who missed the premiere, there are more chances later this month as it tours other venues. But only in Wales. Which sums it up.

THE problem with the big prizes in the arts world is that often they go to the people who need them least. This is certainly the case with the first Birgit Nilsson Prize.

At $1m it's by far the most lucrative award in classical music, paid from money left by the late, great opera singer whose name it bears. But who is the lucky recipient? None other than Placido Domingo, a man whose bank balance certainly doesn't need any help. No doubt Domingo will give the money to some music charity. But awarding him the prize – prompted, it seems, by the dying wishes of La Nilsson – was a redundant gesture. If she admired the man so much (and who doesn't?), a bunch of flowers and a thankyou would have sufficed.

'Lunchtime O'Boulez'

Letters

Directors cut

Sir,

Your banking hall of shame (In the City, Eye 1230), is timely and should be publicised widely.

It begs the question – is there not a strong case for disqualifying such negligent directors, executive or non-executive, from holding directorships?

In 40 years' of regional journalism, I have encountered a number of cases in which negligent directors of relatively minor companies had been quite fairly disqualified from holding directorships for varying periods, for far less serious dereliction of duty than that of the financial high-flyers under scrutiny by the Treasury Committee.

Surely the prospect of long or permanent bans from any boardrooms in the event of responsibility for negligence might concentrate the minds of those who willingly accept lucrative directorships of any kind – or does such a penalty only apply to the small rogue company director without friends in high places?

WILLIE MORRISON,

Inverness.

Sir,

Slicker (Eye 1230) is only partly correct. Non-exec directors do not have to be from the industry on which they are serving to be useful. They are there to provide challenge to the Board and varied backgrounds can add valuable experience. However, many Board members are merely clones of those already appointed and will not challenge.

Industry knowledge and skills can be acquired but ability and willingness to challenge must be present before any appointment. If, after appointment and industry training, intelligent non-execs cannot understand the industry in which they are involved, and they speak up, then that company has a real problem.

Keep plugging away... you're becoming mainstream reading!

D.J. ANCELL,

Thames Ditton, Surrey.

Minder McCanned

Sir,

Cor blimey, guv'nor, down here in my manor we're all in a right old two and eight about your review of Minder (Eye TV, 1230). You've got Channel Five bang to rights when you say that the new series is pony but with regards to the original: "George Cole fell over in a succession of East End car lots – before it's off to the pub – [for] a pint of Watney's Red Barrel"? Do leave it out. The Winchester was not a rubber (or battle) but a members-only club catering to the wealth-creating classes in Fulham (which was still in west London the last time I looked) and the usual was "A large VAT for me and what are you having Terry – a half of lager – and put it on the slate Dave."

Most grievous is your claim that the original series was rubbish – how can you say that about a well-written, well-produced and beautifully acted series that included the greatest-ever TV cop – Cheerful Charlie Chisholm?

Do I make myself crystal?
TIMOTHY BEECROFT,

St Albans.

Sir,

Ford Grenada? (Eye TV, Minder, Eye 1230). Was that a rare model variant originally made for the Caribbean market?

JERRY UWINS,

Via email.

Blind to reason

Sir,

Clearly Rabbi Tony Hammond (Letters, Eye 1229), in thinking that reference to "an eye for an eye" is a specifically anti-Jewish slur, reads more history books than headlines. It was just two months ago that Tehran Provincial Court applied the principle literally, in the case of a man who had blinded a woman with acid – not a likely judgement in Israel. Most modern readers would think of that first.

A broader exegesis of your cartoon would thus accuse Israel of behaving Islamically, or associate the phrase with the whole nasty mess of monotheisms from the Near East, which also gave us a badly misdirected "shock and awe" for "terror".

But in John Gay's words, "'tis so pat to all the tribe, each will cry 'That is levelled at me!'"

TIM POSTON,

Bangalore, India.

Lookalike

Zombie

Chiles

Sir,

While playing a new video game (House of the Dead: Overkill) on my Wii, I was very surprised to find the majority of the zombies I was killing were modelled upon Adrian Chiles from BBC One's One Show. A fate many of us wish upon him?

RHYS ROBERTS,

Anglesey.

Not Flying tonight

Sir,

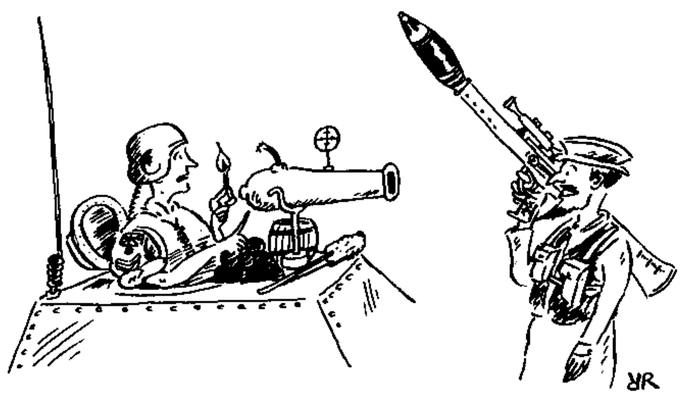
Read in the Times today that you rejected an ad from Flying Matters – congratulations!

Why the airlines would want to use a third party which they directly finance to shame their own customers is beyond me – a sign of their unfocused desperation to try to silence their critics.

There's nothing wrong with celebrity travellers using air travel while being opposed to further airport expansion – Flying Matters' argument makes about as much sense as saying anti-roadbuilding campaigners should only travel across fields and private land. But then they never have been a very bright bunch – perhaps you should have taken the advert and allowed the celebs' resulting anger and media power to have further humiliated them...

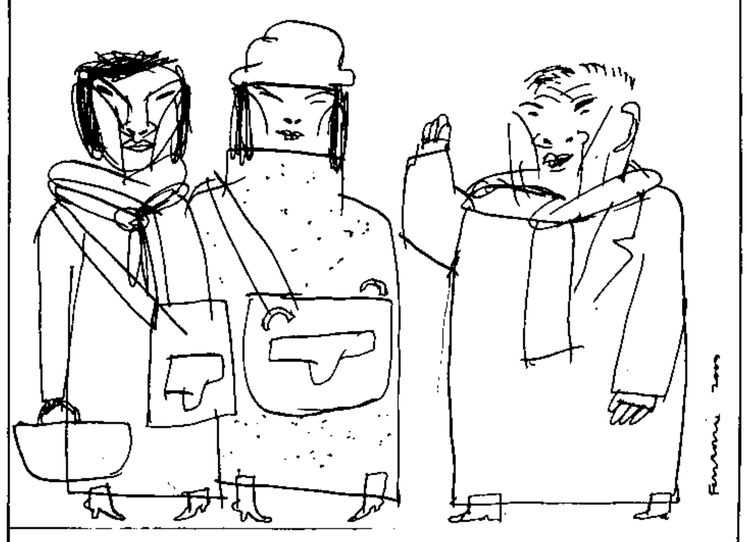
Yours aye,
SIMON MONTAGUE,

Via email.



"You're a better-equipped man than I am, Gunga Din"

Scenes You Seldom See



"OK. So I forgot the camera. Who takes photos?"

Double trouble

Sir,

Re Kevin Morris's (Letters, Eye 1230) criticisms of the double-blind trial system.

Every year, thousands of potential drugs are rejected because double-blind trials demonstrate them to be either ineffective or potentially dangerous. Double-blind trials make it highly improbable, but not impossible, that a dangerous drug will be prescribed. The fact that problems have been detected after a drug has been approved for use by the general public only serves to illustrate the effectiveness of post-market surveillance at discovering problems that, against the odds, have slipped through earlier clinical trials.

Double-blind trials are not perfect, but they are a great deal better than nothing. Until homeopaths think of a better system (and they haven't so far), I'll stick with double-blind trials.

Sincerely,
BRANDON MILHOLLAND,

Via email.

Fly in the ointment

Sir,

Re: Squarebasher's Transport of No Delight (In the Back, Eye 1230).

Crabs (or "Crab" Fat) is a slang term for all RAF staff used by Army and Navy personnel. Reason; the "Blue" colour of their uniform is apparently similar to the colour of the cream (fat) one is supposed to apply to one's nether regions to remove "crab" lice... wouldn't know if the colour is true as never had need for it myself!

Roll on the RAF being dragged screaming in to the 21st century and getting reliable safe transport for the hard-pressed troops.

RICHARD HILL,

Via email.

Self-Service personnel

Sir,

My son is serving in the Royal Engineers. He is currently on 48 hours stand-by for service in Iraq. His on-base equipment is, obviously, not sufficient for the task in hand. But, instead of being issued with what is needed, his colleagues and himself are having to pay for this equipment! This is not something that any of them have been issued with before, or have lost; this is "must-have" equipment. My son has so far had to pay out £250! Can this be right that our service personnel should pay to put their lives on the line?

Many thanks,
DAVID TAYLOR,

Via email.

A Star is worn

Sir,

Regrettably when 'Piloti' strays outside strictly architectural matters, his famed objectivity deserts him, as with his recent article (Eye 1230). Taking his last point first, the Royal Star and Garter Home is not now, and never has been a war memorial, it is a home for disabled ex-Servicemen and Women. When the home was built they were looked after in long "Nightingale" style wards, reminiscent of barracks. The statement that the Home has been successfully modernised over the years is simply no longer true. The residents are now in small single rooms with shared facilities. It is not realistically possible to upgrade them to modern accommodation standards provided by other homes, and which the residents have every right to expect. This conclusion was reached after detailed studies by architects, heritage consultants and cost consultants – among others – over a 12 month period, not, as Piloti states. without a "proper feasibility study".

The review that led to our decision to move to three smaller homes was not driven by "[a] clever-clever trustee who thinks he knows all about money" but was very carefully thought through in full consultation with staff and above all the residents and their families. Incidentally, we have the full support of the residents. The two major reasons for the change were care provision and costs. For example, we cannot provide dementia care, regrettably a growing need, in the present home; we will be able to (and already do at Solihull) in the new homes. We also cannot provide appropriate care for younger disabled Service personnel, again something we are able (and do) at Solihull. Our new home at Solihull, which incidentally is currently short-listed for the Pinders Healthcare awards, has given us hard evidence that shows that our costs are reduced dramatically in a modern facility . We exist to provide care for ex- Servicemen, not maintain listed buildings, and that is, in the view of the Governors, the right way for the charity to spend its funds.

MIKE FARQUHARSON-ROBERTS,
Governor, The Royal Star & Garter Homes.

"Survival of the fittest!"

Lookalike

Stanford

Hale

Sir,

Given Sir Allen Stanford's recent fall from grace I was surprised to see him looking so beat-up in comparison with his old chum Gareth Hale from Hale and Pace fame. Perhaps they are related and perhaps the US authorities should be told.

PAUL ATHERTON,
Alvescot.

Pedantry Corner

... Re First Drafts (Eye 1229) and Michael Charalambous's letter (Eye 1230).

Mesopotamia was an Oxford University satirical organ in the Fifties and Sixties and a precursor of Private Eye. The final issue, in 1969, was a coffee-table edition. It had four fold-out legs which turned it into a coffee table, thus beating the Seinfeld idea by 25 years.

I have since seen reference to a similar publication by the Coffee House Anarchy Party, which ruled Bavaria for nine days in 1918.

Tedium laudamus,
RICHARD HELLER
(Editor Mesopotamia 1969 – it then went into extinction).

... As the worthy Sir Tim Berners-Lee will, if he reads the Eye, have probably already have told you, he didn't invent the Internet.

His outstanding, and inspired, achievement was the combining of Hypertext with features of the Internet, to create the World Wide Web. If the Internet hadn't already been there, this wouldn't have happened.

PETER McCORMACK.

... In Eye 1230's "Neolithic Times", to correct you on a village location, Uffington (not Uffingham) has in truth been in Oxfordshire (Vale of White Horse District!) since 1974. Pedantic, but accuracy is an Eye essential.

G. WHITTLE.

In Eye 1230, who wrote the captions for the "Bafta Frocks Shocks"? He/she should be strapped to the pillory and humiliated, but first ask them who is this "Emily" in the first picture? Shame on them, about as well-informed about fashion and popular entertainment as the average High Court judge. As any fule kno, it's Emma Watson...

ROB OVERFIELD.

... What's so inane about John Torode's "That hot pistachio cake was wonderful, so unctuous and delicious" (Colemanballs, Eye 1230)? "Unctuous" means literally "oily", as pistachio cakes undoubtedly are and equally those "swelling unctuous paps of a fat pregnant sow, newly cut off" that Sir Epicure Mamon in Ben Jonson's "Alchemist" dreams of eating at his banquet. Admittedly, the usual sense nowadays is metaphorical, so Torode's "unctuous" might be called precious, almost a Gallicism. But that's not what you get pilloried in Colemanballs for.

DAVID REID.

... Re Jane Kelly's letter (Eye 1230) concerning the Yobette cartoon in Eye 1229: . Surely it should have been, "I ain't wearing no knickers neither"? Yours lynntrussingly.

BRIAN INNES.

I appreciate your reader's correction: "I'm not wearing no knickers", but come now, I think that a true Yobette (like wot I am) would expostulate thus: "I ain't wearin' no knickers", with the bonus optional extra "Innit".

Got to run... off to my newly formed Yobettes' Madrigal Group! Innit.

CAROLINE EDGINGTON.

Pseudo Names

... We would like to thank the Editor for continuing the Pseudo Names column as we enjoy it so much!

FRASER JOLLY-GOODFELLOW
ANN-SUSIE OLIVERS.

... Admit it: you want to discontinue the Silly Names correspondence but can't bring yourself to do so.

ANN OYING-LEAR
DICK TIFF.

... When will it end? Your last issue includes a Christmas carol of made-up names – talk about dumbing down! What next? Nursery Rhymes?

C. SOAR
MARJORY DAWE
JOHN ESHALL
AVA NEWMASTER.

... Yes, it was probably a mistake to start all this nonsense, but there is no point in lapsing into regrets and recriminations. What's done is done.

WALTER UNDERBRIDGE.

... I'd like to point out that the ancient Greeks had no such thing as a blender.

HOMER PLIANCE.

... Far be it from me to blow my own trumpet, but I can't help but think that mine is probably the best pseudo name in the world.

CARL INGBLACK-LABLE.

... Regarding Dillie Tantay's reasons for putting off writing to you about the Pseudo Names correspondence, I suspect her real reason was her amateur interest in the arts. The letter should actually have been signed by myself, her cousin.,

DILLIE TORY.

... Your Pseudo Names section of the Letters page has been such a roaring success that I feel you should copyright the idea and sell it to other journals before they start plagiarising it.

CINDY KATE RIGHTAWAY.

... Since mention of it closing (so glad it hasn't), I open each new copy of the Eye wondering if I am going to find my favourite bit, Pseudo Names, or not! Actually I quite like the element of suspense you have introduced.

CLIFF HANGER.

● That's enough Pseudo Names. Possibly. Ed.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"If they can erect memorials to ex-players then I'm an adversary for one for Bobby Robson."

IAN HOLLOWAY, Radio 5 Live
(Hugh Jamieson)

"England are looking down the barrel of a yellow card..."

BRIAN MOORE, BBC1
(Michael Cockerell)

"So Harry – is this a game Tottenham must win or is it a game you can't afford to lose?"

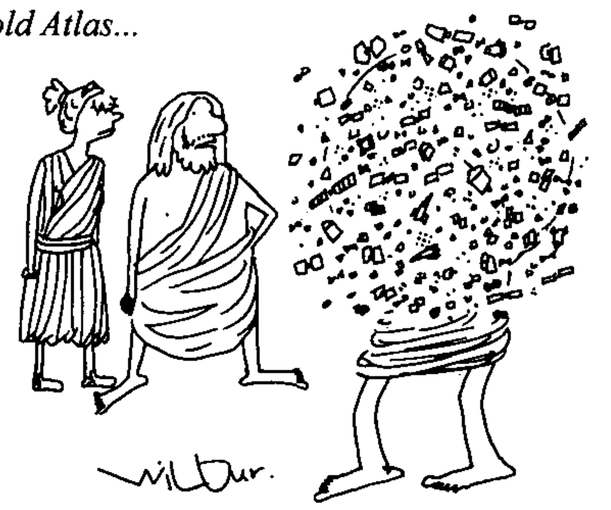
Setanta Sports
(Crispin Gillbard)

"I fear for Hull now. They are the downfall of their own loss."

DANNY MILLS, Radio 5 Live
(Maurice East)

"I think that I've got an awful lot of potential still to come."

Matt (Contestant), Masterchef, BBC2
(Toby Griffin)



Letter from **The Hague**
from Our Own Correspondent

WHAT a service Britain provided by deciding to ban our peroxide blond politician Geert Wilders from entering your hallowed shores.

Until your home secretary Jacqui Smith's decision to bar an elected MP convicted of no crime from the UK, few people outside the Netherlands had heard of him – beyond the readers of Jihad Watch and Stormfront of course.

But Geert got to enjoy a fun day out at Heathrow and is now a fully-fledged member of the Martyrs to Free Speech Club. The little jaunt to Britain with an entourage of 50 journalists has so boosted his profile here that some polls say his anti-immigration party, the Partij voor de Vrijheid (Freedom Party), would be the second biggest behind the Christian Democrats were there to be an election tomorrow. Who cares that he wants to ban books and ban radical Muslim preachers from his home soil. His careful positioning of himself as a defender of free speech against the Islamic hordes has even boosted his standing among our chattering classes, thanks to all that BBC coverage.

Of course in English-language interviews Geert is careful to say he is not against Muslims per se, just extremists. But in Dutch he happily talks about a tsunami of Muslims flooding the country; he wants a ban on Muslim immigration, and talks of Muslim colonisers taking over Dutch towns and Muslim scum on the streets.

But, as we Dutch keep trying to explain to your British government, it is his right to say that and you really ought to let him into your country to say it too. After all, Geertie has ambitions far beyond these shores. His private website's main language is English and includes many links to all the British newspaper articles you have published arguing that he should have been allowed into London to show his high-school video compilation.

Geertie has now decided that his party will stand in the European elections in June to spread his fame even further and wider. Perhaps he will even run for the European parliament himself – after all, he was not allowed to show his video in Brussels either.

But if he did manage to take himself off to Belgium, he will have a much wider audience to listen to his rants calling for an end to immigration into the Netherlands from non-western countries, an end to dual nationality and the deportation of Dutch citizens of Moroccan origin who have been convicted of a crime. And, most interesting of all, Geert and his PVV party are also in favour of abolishing the European parliament itself. An interesting take on democracy, that, but it can only add to his popularity.

NUMBER CRUNCHING

16 Days it took Tony Blair to visit Barack Obama after his inauguration as US president

612 Days it took Tony Blair to visit Gaza after his appointment as Middle East envoy

FUNNY OLD WORLD

COMPILED BY **VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH**

● "My client is adamant that these offences were not committed for sexual gratification," defending solicitor Terence Booth told magistrates in Chesterfield. "It was purely a bizarre social experiment. When he tucked a large prosthetic penis inside his jogging shorts, it was simply part of a psychology experiment, to see how women would react. He would wander the Derbyshire hills, looking for women who were out walking, cycling, or jogging, and when he got close to them, he would point to his groin and strike a pose. But when police arrested him at his Hathersage home, he showed them the sex toy strapped inside his shorts, and said 'I haven't exposed myself at all – it's rubber.' And he told officers that if women

could wear revealing clothing, then he ought to be able to experiment in the same way."

Forty-five-year-old Mark Malaczyniski admitted seven charges of insulting behaviour, but his defence insisted that any offence had been unintentional. "He is a psychology enthusiast, and was conducting an experiment. He has learned his lesson now, and it won't be happening again. He now accepts that even if young women are allowed to dress provocatively, that does not give him the right to equip himself with a large rubber penis and provide some from of provocation for the opposite sex."

Malaczyniski was ordered to do 160 hours' unpaid work, and was given a two-year probation supervision order. *(Buxton Advertiser, 23/12/08. Spotter: Graeme Atkinson)*

– ● –

● *"We do see a lot of strange bank robberies," FBI spokesman Ross Rice told a press conference in Chicago, but this is the first time we've had a bank robber who actually solved his own crime for us. Thomas Infante walked into the Fifth Third Bank at about 5:50, and handed the teller a note that read 'Be Quick Be Quit [sic], Give your cash or I'll shoot.' So the teller handed over $397, and Mr Infante fled, leaving the demand note behind.*

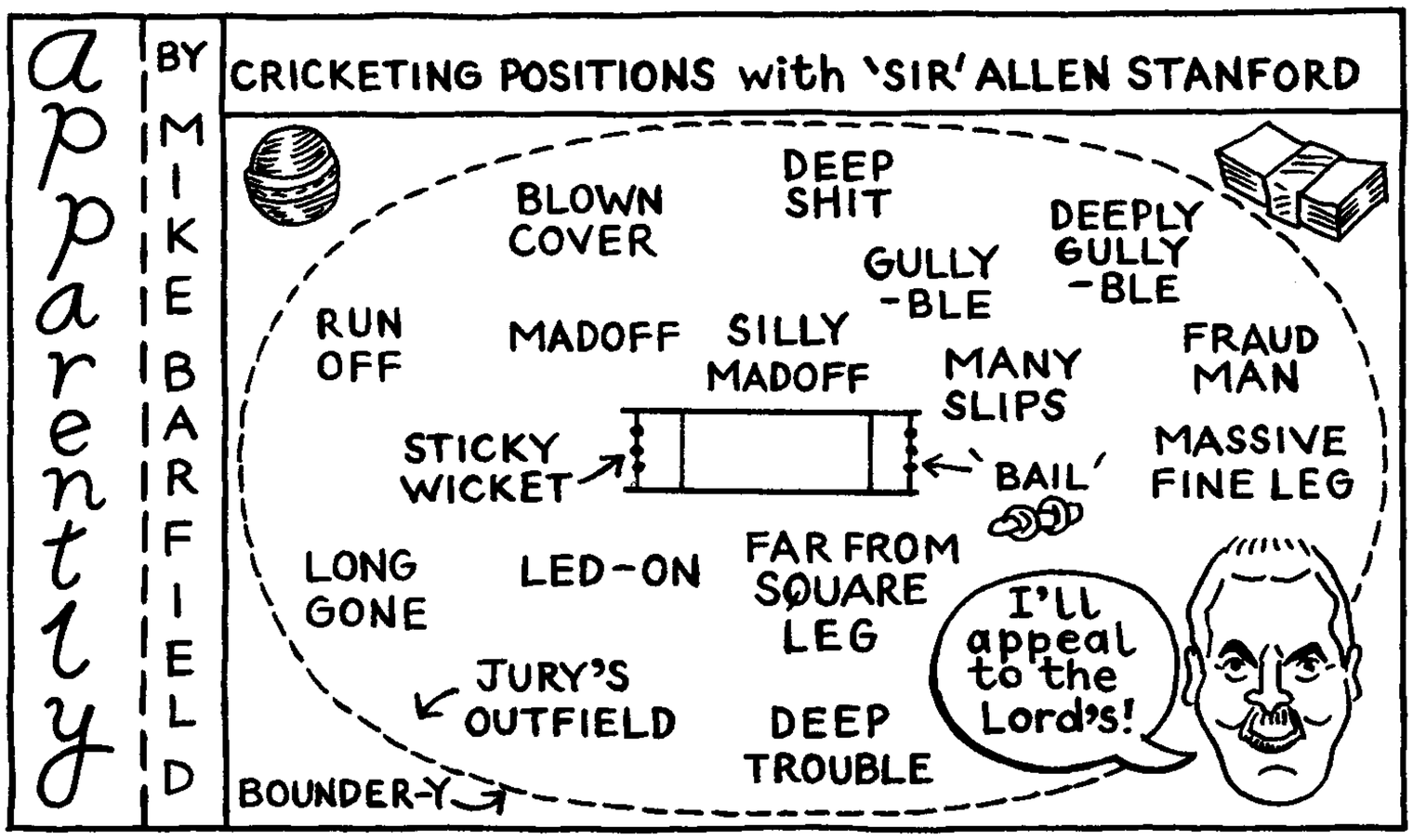
When the teller turned the note over, he found it had been written on a torn half of a pay slip. On arrival at the bank , the police found the other half of the slip outside the front door. When they put the two halves together, they could see it was a payslip for Thomas Infante who worked at Jewel Food Stores, and had been paid $165.99 the previous week. It even had his home address on it, in Cary, Illinois, so they simply went round there, waited for him to get home, and arrested him. It's fairly unusual for us to see something that specifically stupid."

Infante faces a sentence of up to 20 years in prison. (Sun Sentinel [Florida], 30/12/08. Spotter: Stephen Goss)

– ● –

● "As a death midwife, I'm helping to usher a person out of this world and into the next," Jerrigrace Lyons of Final Passages explained to reporters in Sebastopol, California. "It's the same threshold as birth, it's the same doorway. I always turn up on a case with a makeup kit and a cardboard casket, along with practical instructions for icing and transporting bodies, and for as little as $500 I can help the bereaved to bypass the traditional funeral industry altogether. Until recently, my clients were mostly attracted by the alternative nature of my services, but now many people call me because they simply cannot afford a conventional burial or funeral, which often costs more than $10,000."

Joshua Slocum of the Funeral Consumers Alliance added that "in good times and bad, funerals have consistently been an incredible expense. For a society of people who consider themselves to be savvy consumers, we've been remarkably unsavvy when it comes to this subject. It's a social taboo to talk about money when talking about death, but this economic situation is forcing us to reassess the value of what we buy. That's why business is booming for DIY death midwives." *(Burnett County Sentinel [Wisconsin], 14/1/09. Spotter: Brendan Joseph O'Byrne)*



PRIME MINISTERIAL DECREE NO. 39

From the Desk of the Supreme Leader

Comrades,

Let no one be in any doubt, the outlook for the world is getting blacker by the hour.

Only now are we realising just how deep is the abyss of toxic debt into which we have been plunged by the reckless greed of the banking classes, led by the infamous capitalist running dog Sir Red Goodwin, the hated former adviser to myself.

How could these wreckers and saboteurs have been allowed to flourish during the last decade? Where were the state regulators who should have been exercising due viligance on behalf of hard-working British families?

Truly, Comrades, we have all been betrayed by these bonus-crazy jackals, feasting on the rotting carcasses of a corrupt and decadent economic system. But no one has been betrayed more than myself.

How could I have been expected, as your all-seeing and ever-vigilant Supreme Leader, to know what these shameless criminals and parasites were up to under my very nose? Of course I could not.

But the more frivolous and light-headed elements of the proletariat, their brains befogged by the propagandist antics of the Murdochian-Dacreite-Guardianista media, have decided to point the finger at me, your Supreme Leader, as being responsible for their plight.

But, Comrades, am I disheartened by this outpouring of obloquy from the masses? Certainly not! On the contrary, my will is only strengthened and my resolve is redoubled by the fact that my standing in the polls has fallen to zero.

I delight in such "unpopularity". Every great Supreme Leader in history has been unpopular, from my predecessor, Comrade Mrs Thatcher, to the great Mao Tse Tung. And for this there is a very good reason. If a Supreme Leader is doing the right thing, making the tough decisions which are necessary to build the better world of tomorrow, it is inevitable that he will incur temporary hostility from the uninformed masses.

But if there is one lesson we can learn from history, it is that the people are always wrong, as they demonstrated when they repeatedly gave their votes to the discredited former leader Blair.

That is why I have been careful never to let them pronounce on my own leadership, in the full knowledge that it is better that I should speak for them rather than allow them to make catastrophic errors by exercising their own judgement.

Therefore, it is not surprising that, despite the erroneous verdict of the lumpenproletariat in our own British country, I have been chosen by the 20 most powerful countries in the world to lead them in a conference here in London in April, so that I can shown them how to save the world (again).

They have even, in tribute to my financial acumen, called their conference G20 – G for Gordon!

Is it any wonder that I have been chosen by Comrade President Obama as the first Supreme Leader from Europe to be granted an audience at the White House? And I do not, of course, include the undignified and deranged grovellings of the obsequious former leader Blair, with his superstitious mediaevalist voodoo-ism, whose appearance at the recent Presidential prayer-breakfast made him a laughing stock throughout the world.

Yours,

Gordon Brown

Supreme Leader

COMRADE HARMAN: A Commendation

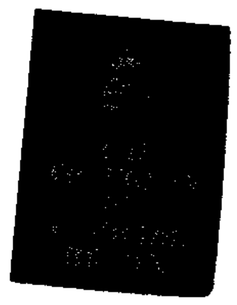
I would like to congratulate the Deputy Supreme Leader for her zeal in announcing that Comrade Sir Fred Goodwin would be deprived of his pension whatever the law says.

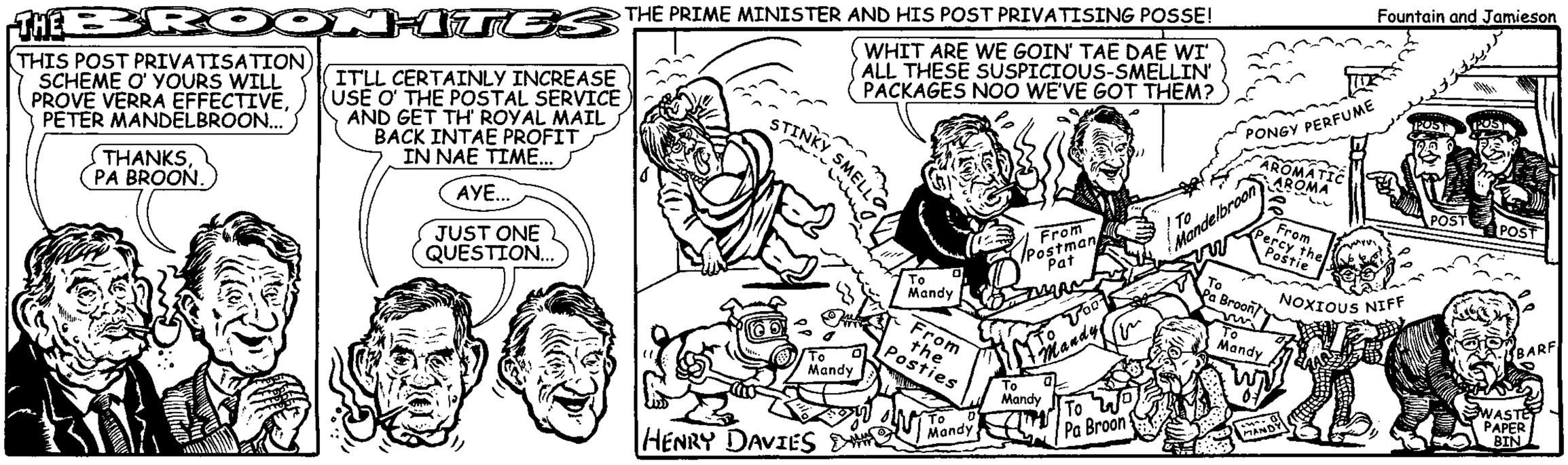
Comrade Harman is an experienced lawyer and would no doubt have thought the matter through before making this ridiculous remark. No-one as clever as Comrade Harman could surely advocate a course of action that has no chance of ever being implemented? That would be the act of a senseless stupid woman overcome by petty ambition trying to court public opinion with a crude and desperate publicity stunt in her doomed attempt to replace the Supreme Leader.

No, I cannot believe it of Comrade Harman and will put her remarks down to an excess of socialist enthusiasm in pursuit of the criminal capitalist renegade and my former adviser Comrade Sir Fred Goodwin.

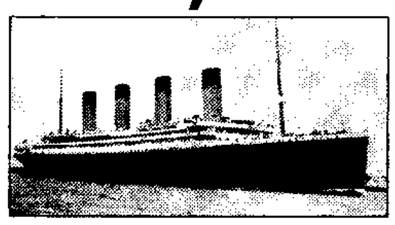
G.B.

"If a capitalist is unwilling to give up his ill-gotten gains voluntarily, then the Leader has no option but to do nothing."




THE BROONITES
THE PRIME MINISTER AND HIS POST PRIVATISING POSSE!
Fountain and Jamieson
THIS POST PRIVATISATION SCHEME O' YOURS WILL PROVE VERRA EFFECTIVE, PETER MANDELBROON...
THANKS, PA BROON.
IT'LL CERTAINLY INCREASE USE O' THE POSTAL SERVICE AND GET TH' ROYAL MAIL BACK INTAE PROFIT IN NAE TIME...
AYE...
JUST ONE QUESTION...
WHIT ARE WE GOIN' TAE DAE WI' ALL THESE SUSPICIOUS-SMELLIN' PACKAGES NOO WE'VE GOT THEM?
STINKY SMELLS
PONGY PERFUME
AROMATIC AROMA
NOXIOUS NIFF
To Mandelbroon
From Postman Pat
From Percy the Postie
From the Posties
To Mandy
To Pa Broon
POST
BARF
WASTE PAPER BIN
HENRY DAVIES

'BAIL-OUT WORKING,' SAYS CAPTAIN



by Our Shipping Staff **Michael White Star Line**

THE CAPTAIN of the Titanic last night praised his crew's efforts to rescue his sinking ship.

Captain Brown announced from the bridge, "The bailing-out process is going according to plan. We will be bottoming out very soon and we are on course for the sea bed."

Unsinkable Gordon Brown

The Titanic recently hit a huge Northern Rock, which opened a black hole below the waterline, and has been in trouble ever since. However Captain Brown said, "There is no cause for alarm. I will not be going down with the glug.. glug... glug...!!"

RECESSION – WHAT RECESSION?

Here are the gloom-busting businesses who are putting a smile back on all our faces!

❶ Chocolate Manufacturers Britain's choc eaters are eating more of their favourite comfort food than ever! In Jan-March 2009, sales of Nestlé's "Nookie" Bar increased by 7½%.

❷ Undertakers Thanks to Britain's burgeoning suicide rate, the nation's coffin makers are enjoying a record boom!

❸ Job Centres As estate agents close, Job Centres are opening in every high street, which means more jobs in Job Centres – which must be good news!

❹ Cardboard Box Manufacturers More Britons than ever are discovering the pleasures of al fresco living! Sales of ready-made, family-size cardboard dwellings are literally going through the roof.

❺ Bad Journalism As desperate newspapers vie to fill up their pages with any old rubbish like this, really terrible hackery is recording a massive 100% increase across the board.

(That's enough booming businesses.)

"The bird-feeder needs refilling, dear"

TV Tonight

The History of Christianity

Pt 94: **Faith in a Materialist Age**

Presented by CHERIE BLAIR

(Silly music. Shot of Cherie Blair in mackintosh, walking down aisle of church)

Blair: It is very hard for the church to survive when the modern world is so overwhelmingly concerned with the making of money and the consumption of goods.

(Shot of Cherie Blair running round clothes shop and filling trolley with designer items)

Blair: Nowadays, it is all too easy to be obsessed by owning things like houses and flats.

(Shot of Cherie buying huge country mansion, formerly property of Sir John Gielgud)

Blair: Our leaders seem only concerned with enriching themselves in every way they can.

(Shot of senior Catholic figure, T. Blair, running into J.P. Morgan Bank and emerging shortly afterwards with a huge sack of money)

Blair: No wonder that the Church's message of self-denial falls upon stony ground... by the way, how much am I being paid for this?

I'm very busy, you know, and I've got a lot of mortgages to pay.

(More silly music)

Ends

Next week: *A History of Venality Pt. 95*

Let's Parlez Franglais!

Numero 94 Le Top-Level EU Summit

Berlusconi *(pour c'est lui)*: Saluta Sarko!

Sarkozy *(pour c'est lui)*: Bonjour Berlo! J'ai un très exciting new hobby, mon ami.

Berlo: Qu'est-ce que c'est?

Sarko: C'est le philately.

Berlo: Qué?

Sarko: C'est à dire le stamp collecting! Maintenant chaque soir je vais au lit et look at mon grand collection de beautiful timbres.

Berlo: Non e possible! Buffoni! Pullez the other jambe!

Sarko: Non, c'est vrai! C'est très interesting et grande fun!

Berlo: Mais je gather que vous avez un très valuable Italian Bruni dans votre collection – en perfect condition et

"unused" – nudgez, nudgez, winkez, winkez!!

Sarko: Qu'est-ce que vous êtes implying?

Berlo: If c'était moi dans le lit avec le rare Bruni, je wouldn't be messing around avec les boring stamps! Vous must be fou! Ou probablement gai! Pas d'offence!

Sarko: Espèce de wop! Venez outside and nous sorterons this one out!

Berlo: Comme des stamps! Ha! Ha! Ha! Et je donnerai vous un licking!

© Le Late Kilometres Kington

Advertisement

■ **To commemorate the marriage of Miss Jade Goody and Mr Jack Tweed, the DAILY MAILOGRAPH is proud to offer our readers a free DVD of "COCKLESHELL HEROES", the classic 1955 wartime action movie, starring Trevor Howard and Anthony Newley.**

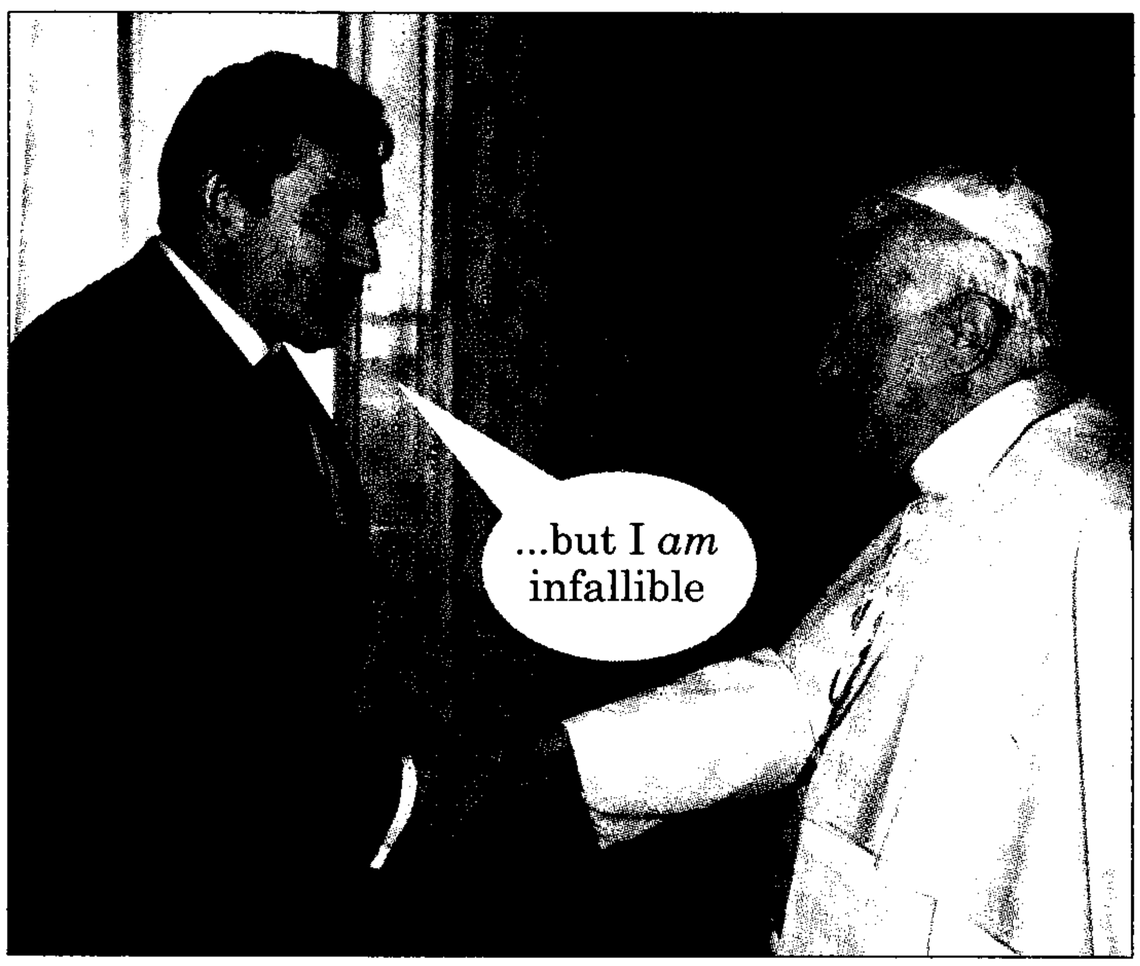
■ **Think of Jade and Jack's special day as you thrill to the commando raid on Bordeaux Harbour.**

The perfect souvenir for a very special day

New from Royal Mail

A set of four stamps is to be issued to celebrate the achievements of GREAT BRITISH PRIVATISERS

SPECIAL FIRST DAY COVER
The complete set is available for only £25.99 from your nearest post office (Amsterdam)



BELGIANS INVENTED CROQUET SHOCK

by Our Sports Correspondent **Timmy Mallett**

RECENT evidence unearthed by an Australian academic, Professor Bruce McPossum from the University of Hullaballoo in New South Wales, proves that the game of croquet originated not in England but in Bruges in Belgium.

According to a poem he has discovered by the little known Walloon poet, Erik Van der Thribb, writing in the 17½th century, croquet was already played by Bruges emigrant weavers working in Essex in the fast-emerging Trouser Press Industry.

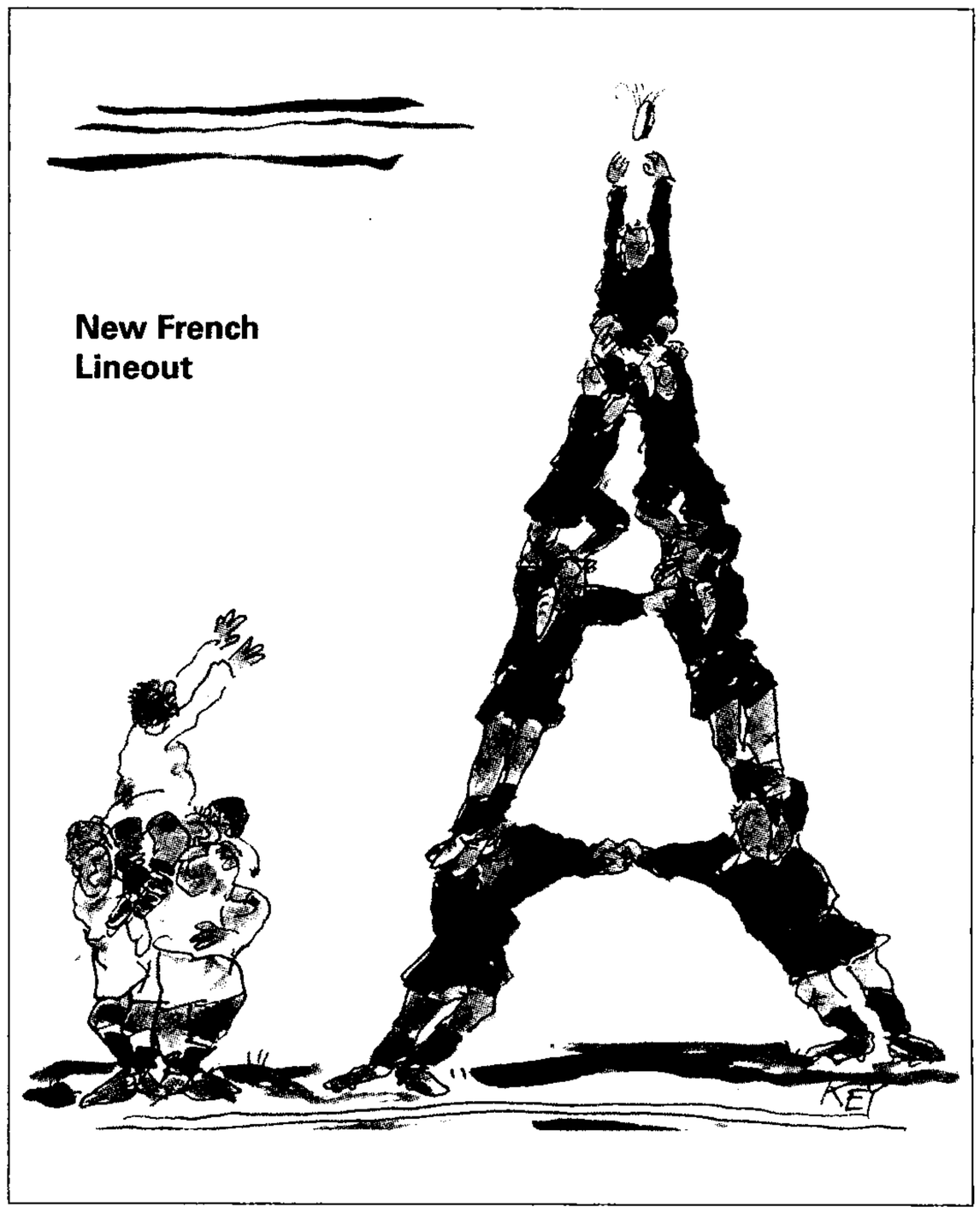
The poem reads:

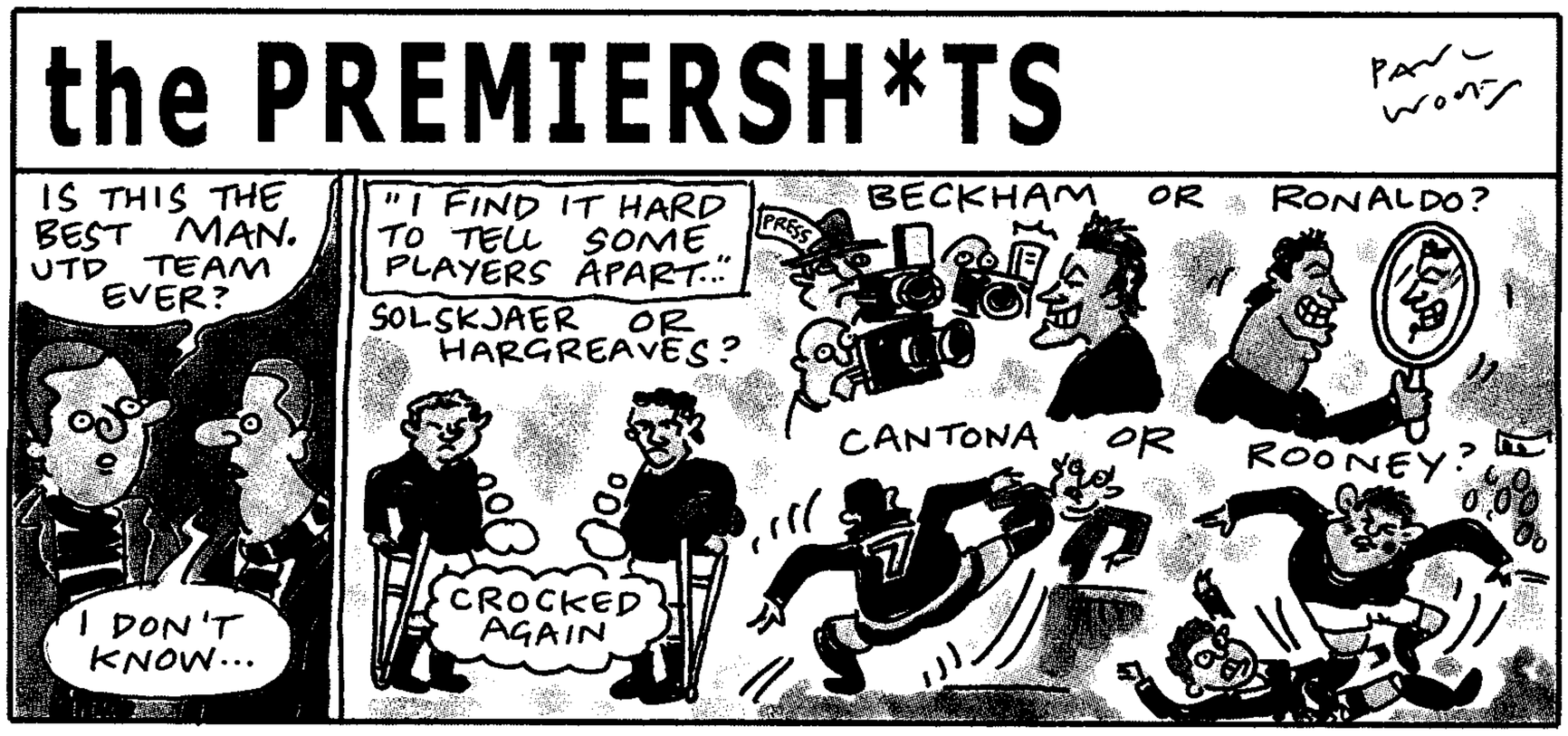
Hët die ball
Thruwen die hoop
And listen ye all
To the cheers of die Grüpe

Says the professor, "This is clearly proof that croquet is nothing to do with the bloody poms who are as useless at croquet as they are at cricket, rugby and everything else. Mine's a large glass of the amber."

CROQUET LATEST

England 93 all out
Belgium 793 for 3





That All-Purpose Breast Cancer Risk Article in Full

WOMEN this week were warned that new research has found that just one glass of wine a day greatly increases their risk of getting breast cancer which is greatly reduced by drinking three or more cups of tea a day which is greatly increased by watching more than four hours of television a week which is greatly reduced by doing yoga which is greatly increased by eating seafood which is greatly decreased by eating kumquats which is greatly increased by... *(cont. p. 94)*

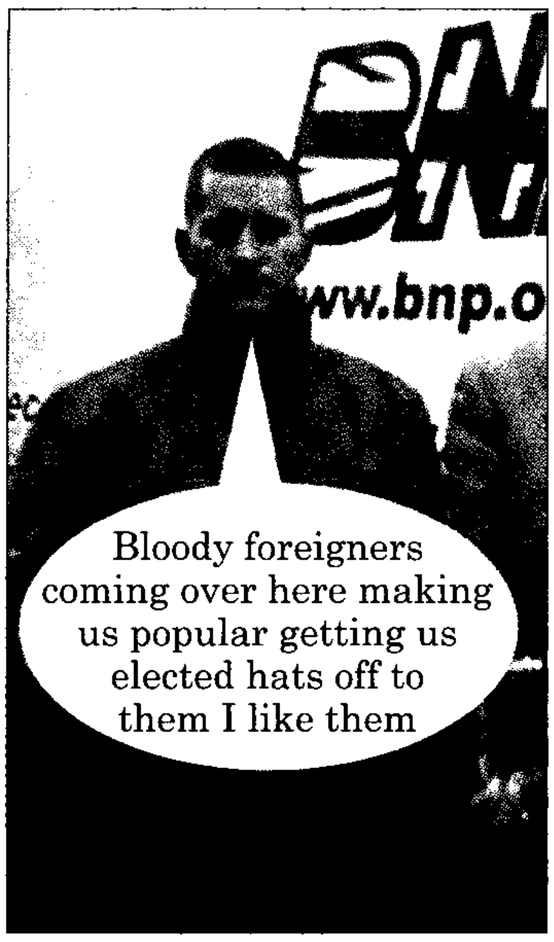
SIX-YEAR-OLD BOY DIES

A SIX-year-old boy died yesterday in London. *(Reuters)*

On Other Pages

- A Nation United In Grief **1**
- Parliament Suspended **2**
- 'The Six-Year-Old Boy I Knew' by all hacks **3-6**
- 'How 6-Year-Old Boy Turned Toff Into Leader' by all hacks who *didn't* know 6-Year-Old Boy **7-12**
- 'I Know What The Family Is Going Through' by anyone with similar story we can find **13-14**
- 'Why We Must Respect Family's Privacy' with hundreds of pics of parents crying **94**

BNP ELECTED



Lives of the Saints and Martyrs No. 94

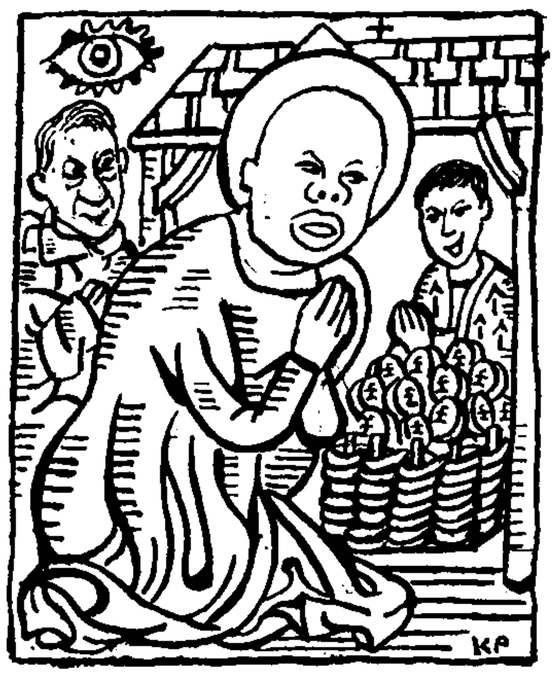
St Jade the Goody

(sometimes known as St Jade the Obscure)

THERE WAS in that time a poor peasant girl, ill-mannered and ill-favoured in every way. Jade's life was changed for ever when she was picked out from her humble hovel to join a celebrated enclosed order of the time known as the Big Brothers.

Made up equally of men and women, the Brothers forsook all worldly goods and took a vow of celebrity, living communally in the "House" and dedicating their lives to ignorance and mutual abuse.

In a short while, Jade attracted a huge personal following, but alas she fell from grace when she unwisely addressed a comely young novice from the Indies as a "f****** Paki".



Poor Jade was expelled from the Big Brotherhood and was scorned and derided by the multitude.

Yet, in her misery and humiliation, Jade found grace. She earnestly repented and sought forgiveness from the Blessed Media.

Before long they relented, particularly when they discovered that she was dying.

Jade was now hailed throughout the land as a martyr and living saint. There was even a miracle, which astonished all those who witnessed it.

Jade had become betrothed to a young criminal of the time, by name Jack Tweed. But he was languishing in a prison cell.

Then lo, the gates of the prison were suddenly thrown open, thanks to the intercession of a well-known holy man of the time, St Jack of Straw.

The tags dropped from Tweed's leg and he walked free. And so it was that the couple were wed before the eyes of the nation, and Jade received a million gold coins from *Halo!* magazine.

Next week: St John of the Ross.

Those Secret Cabinet Minutes That JACK STRAW Won't Let Us Read – In Full

TOP SECRET

Minutes of Cabinet Meeting Held On 3 March, 2003

1. **Apologies**
   Apologies for absence: R. Cook.

2. **Minutes**
   The Minutes of the previous meetings were read by Mr A. Campbell and approved.

3. **Any Other Business**
   The Prime Minister (A. Blair) announced that the President of the United States had decided to invade Iraq as soon as possible, and had also decided that Britain would join with him in the invasion.

   The Prime Minister said that he was 100 percent behind the President on this matter, and asked Mr Campbell to hand round copies of a dossier he had prepared, in conjunction with the Joint Services Intelligence Committee, proving why the need for the invasion was, in Mr Campbell's words, a "fucking no-brainer".

   The Attorney-General (Mr Goldsmith) said that, since the previous meeting when he had expressed some reservations about the legality of invading a country for no reason at all, he had consulted a higher authority (Mr Blair) and was now "of a mind to support the Prime Minister in whatever it was that he and Mr Bush wished quite legally to do".

   The Foreign Secretary (Mr Straw) said that he was sure he spoke for all his colleagues in congratulating the Prime Minister on his proposed course of action, and thanked him for letting the Cabinet know about the decision before it got in the papers.

   The Prime Minister thanked Mr Straw for his loyal support, and asked the Chancellor (Mr Brown) whether his grumpy silence during the meeting could be taken as wholehearted support.

   Mr Brown made a noise which was interpreted as "Yes".

   Mr Blair then asked the Cabinet to demonstrate their backing for his proposed invasion with a show of hands.

   Mr Campbell then explained to various ministers, including the Secretary of State for International Development (Mrs C. Short) that he knew where they lived, after which the motion was passed unanimously.

   The Prime Minister closed the meeting by leading the Cabinet in a short chorus of his own composition, the words of which were as follows: "Forward, forward, never back, God's told me to invade Iraq".

There being no further business, it was decided to inform Mr Bush that his invasion could proceed as planned, and the meeting was closed.

ME AND MY SPOON

THIS WEEK

UNIVERSITY CHALLENGE'S GAIL TRIMBLE

Have you ever...
Yes.

How many...
375.

What sort of...
Antique silver Dutch memorial spoon.

If you had to...
George III.

Do you...
The Latin for spoon is *cochleare*.

Has anything amusing...
No.

Thank you very much.

NEXT WEEK: *The late Heath Ledger – "Me and my ledger".*

GLENDA SLAGG

Fleet Street's Toxic Asset!?!!

■ COME OFF it, Fergie!?!! Who are you kidding?!! You say you only scoffed the cakes 'cos you couldn't compete with Princess Di!?! Don't make me laugh!!?! There's only one reason you ate all the pies, sweetheart, and that's 'cos you're a great big guzzle-bucket!?!! No offence, Your Duchessness!!? So put a sock in it instead of a cream bun!?!! Geddit?! And watch the pounds slip away!!?!

■ SPARE A THOUGHT for poor old Fergie!?! No wonder she had to eat herself silly when standing alongside superslim sexy Di, the Thin People's Princess!?! Who *wouldn't* tuck into a mountain of cakes topped off with a bucket of pies when you've got the sister-in-law from Hell (or *Hello!* Geddit?!) a-tauntin' and a-flauntin', a-floutin' and a-poutin' next to you in front of the world's paparazzi!?!! Get off her back Mr Pressman and let her carry on a-crunchin' and a-munchin' her cream buns in peace!?!!

■ GAIL TRIMBLE!?!! She's University Challenge's brainy boffinette who's made being clever the in-thing!?!! Mensa? Wo-mensa, more like?!? Geddit?!? Mortarboards off to you, Gail, for showing that gals today can be more than a pretty face!?!!

■ HERE'S YOUR Starter for Ten – who's the most smug self-satisfied clever clogs on the planet?!? No conferring!?! We all know the answer to this one, don't we gals?!? It's Boring Blue-Stocking Brainbox Trimble!?! Take a tip from Aunty Glenda, swotty – belt up and act dumb. You're giving us gals a bad name!?!

■ *HERE THEY ARE – Glenda's Lenten Lotharios!?!.*

● **Heston Blumenthal.** OK, so your food makes the punters vomit!?! But there's one fat duck you can come and stuff any day!?! Geddit?!?

● **Gordon Ramsay.** OK, so you didn't play for Rangers after all!?! Never mind – you can come and *lie* round at my place and I'll let you score!?! Geddit?!?

● **The bald bloke with the beard who won Master Chef.** There's a tasty dish waiting for you to warm up!?! Geddit?!!?

Byeee!!

Why are clever women so unpopular?

asks **Mary Ann Bighead**

GAIL TRIMBLE, the star of University Challenge's winning team from Corpus Christi Oxford, has been vilified for being very clever.

I know how she feels. In fact I know even more about it than she does because I'm even cleverer than her. And you may not like me for saying it but it is a fact. Just one of the millions of facts that I know – and you don't.

I too went to Oxford and I have also been on University Challenge. Like Gail I found the questions far too easy and the reason I didn't answer all of them was because I didn't want to embarrass all the other not-so-clever contestants. Clever, eh?

And that is Gail's problem. She's not clever enough to realise that being too clever is not a very clever thing to be. However I do.

So I think it's pretty clear that overall I'm cleverer than Gail and that actually I won University Challenge this year – and Ms Trimble, for all her long hair and glasses and invitations to pose for *Nuts* magazine *didn't*. And what's more Jeremy Paxman fancied me a lot more too.

© Mary Ann Bighead

The Alternative Rocky Horror Common Worship Service Book

A Service of Thanksgiving For The Recession

The President: Brother and sister jobseekers, we are gathered here today to give thanks for the current meltdown of the world economy, following the collapse of the banking system, which has given us a much-needed opportunity in a very real sense to re-examine our values and refocus our lives on the things that really matter.

Jobseekers: Indeedydo!

(There shall then be a first reading from the Book of Job)

FIRST READING

"And Job was sore afflicted. Not only was his body covered with boils, but his P45 had just come through the post.

"And the Lord spake out of the mighty whirlwind and said to Job, 'After living all those years on borrowed milk and honey, thou hadst it coming to thee.'

"And Job gave thanks to the Lord for giving him a new perspective on his work/life balance."

"Here endeth the First Reading."

OFFERTORY HYMN No. 94

"There is a green shoot far away
Without a City bonus."

(During this hymn a collection will be taken for the recently unemployed [everyone])

SECOND READING

(from The Book Of The Prophet Jeremiah Clarkson)

"Woe unto ye, all ye City tosspots and merchant wankers. Ye have lost me all my money. Ye should all be strung up for there is only one language that ye understand, and it is not Hebrew.

"Dost thou gettest my meaning?"

Reader: This is the word of the Clarkson.

Congregation: Thanks be to Stig.

OFFERTORY HYMN No. 95

"Northern Rock of Ages, cleft for me.
Let me hide my savings in thee (now that you've been nationalised)."

THE PEACE

The President: Let us all give each other our business cards as a sign of hope.

(The congregation shall then exchange cards containing contact details for their new internet start-up businesses)

THE BLESSING

The President: Bless!

(The organ shall then play 'The Trumpet Voluntary Redundancy' [arr. Felix Mandelson])

From The Message Boards

Members of the online community respond to the major issues of the day...

Sandwich board man lands job

Hats off to the unemployed engineer who advertised his availability for work by wearing a sandwich board and standing next to a motorway. I have already taken on several highly qualified middle-aged men who found themselves out of work through no fault of their own. I am 22 years old and run a successful sandwich board hire company. – ***Jon***

Parents complain about disabled presenter

I read about the parents who are worried that their children will be frightened by Cerrie Burnell, the CBeebies presenter with a missing arm. To be on the safe side I broached the subject with my own daughters. I asked them if they were worried that Cerrie might chase them in the woods, or hide in the wardrobe and poke them with her stump. They said they hadn't thought of that, so I reassured them that Cerrie lives a long way away and it would be very difficult for her to find our house. My youngest is now terrified that "Cerrie is coming to get me". I really think the BBC should be more responsible when making programmes for impressionable children. — ***Emily***

Any kids presenter jumps out at my girls I swear Ill do time – ***Family_man***

This fiasco sums up everything that's wrong with New Labour's BBC. First they waste £18 million on that smirking lout Jonathan Ross and now they can't even afford a proper presenter for the kiddies. – ***Brown_out***

god bless cerri bernel god bless ivan camron 2 disebled angel's – ***Justice_4_Maddie***

Forgotten Baby P already have you Justice? – ***Rot_in_hell_Myra***

i warnd u befor I hope ur kids die u scumbag ●●● god bless baby p an angel in heven – ***Justice_4_Maddie***

Is it me or are dogs getting younger? – ***Bogbrush***

Late News

ADULT COUPLE HAVE BABY

THERE was shock and outrage last night at the news that a married couple in their thirties had produced a baby.

As details of the over-age pregnancy emerged it became clear that the woman had not had the baby by accident and there were no doubts about the identity of the baby's father.

The couple are apparently planning to bring the baby up themselves rather than putting it into care or handing it over to the grandparents. In a statement to the press the mother said, "We will definitely be able to cope. My husband has a job, we live in a house and I can look after the baby since I don't have to go to school."

The Local Health Authority said yesterday, "This is obviously an extraordinary event and we will be keeping a close eye on the couple to check on their progress."

"It's unconventional but it may work."

NORTHERN ROCK RETURNS

CHANCELLOR Alistair Darling today hailed the news that Northern Rock would be returning to the mortgage market by offering some £14 billion of new loans over the next two years.

"What better way of bringing an end to the era of irresponsible lending led by Northern Rock than by giving pots of taxpayers' money to Northern Rock so that they can begin lending it irresponsibly again?" said a beaming Chancellor.

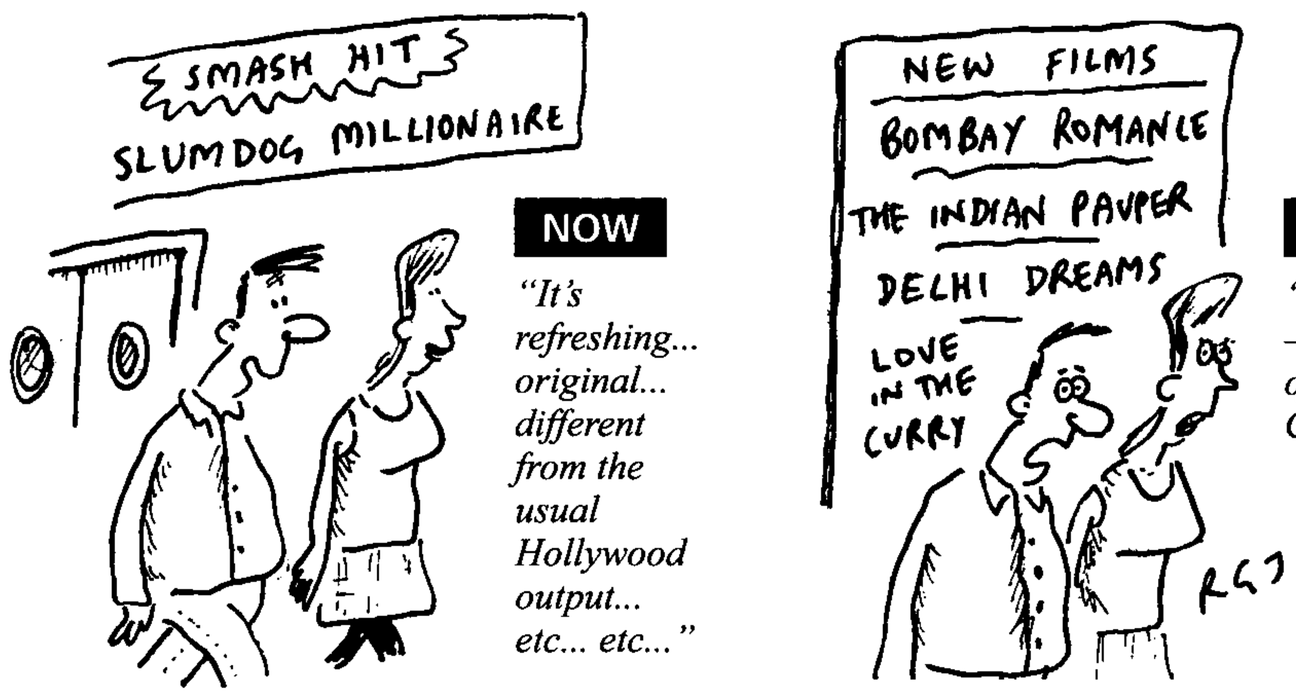
TV MERGER CONCERNS

THERE HAS been much disquiet expressed in media circles about a proposed merger of ITV, Channel 4 and Channel 5.

"We would need to ensure that the distinctive nature of each channel was preserved," said an Ofcom lady, who seemed awfully nice. "At this stage we can't see it happening.

"How on earth can ITV – known for cheap entertainment shows and tacky documentaries – and Channel 4 – renowned for tacky documentaries and cheap entertainment shows – and Channel 5, which has a huge reputation for tacky entertainment shows and cheap documentaries – possibly merge?" *(Reuters)*

Movies – How It Will Be



Oscars Frocks Shocks!

IT'S Oscar Time... and yet again our fashion editor **CAT HARPIE** gives out her gongs to the greatest gowns – and her razzies to the red carpet ragbags!

It's the Pitts! **Angelina** looks like she's raided a tomb for this drab black number! It's all gone from Brad to worse!

This beautiful understated gown is a great look for **Ms Jolie** to adopt! We wouldn't change(ling) a thing!

Penelope is sure to make all the guys "hola" with delight in this stunning gown! There are no (Spanish) flies on Ms Cruz!

This fussy number is Woody terrible! What a "**Cruz**"ing disappointment! If she dresses like this she'll end up a (Barcel) loner!

Oh no! What does **Rubina** think she's wearing?! It's **Ali** wrong! This isn't a kids' **Qureshi**, you know! Slum mistake surely!

What a slumdog's dinner of a dress! Where's the designer gown and the jewellery? **Rubina** doesn't look like a millionaire. *(You're fired, you silly bitch. Ed.)*

POLICE LOG

Neasden Central Police Station

0815 hrs All officers were required to attend the Video Surveillance Room, to study CCTV footage compiled the previous evening in assorted local public houses. These included the Bee And Drainpipe (formerly the Duke Of Cambridge), the Wallis And Vomit (formerly the Queen Victoria) and the Laptop And Lapdancer (formerly the Boston Arms). Officers identified 25 possible criminal actions being committed, including sexual harassment, use of language likely to incite racial hatred, singing without a music licence, unauthorised gambling (i.e. dominoes), excessive consumption of alcohol (i.e. 2 units for men, 1.5 for women, 1.75 for members of transgender community) and, worst of all, several flagrant acts of smoking in a workplace.

0832 hrs Session suspended due to emergency call-out to apprehend elderly female suspect who was the subject of a formal complaint by Mr Darren Yobb, 16, a self-employed graffiti artist. While attempting an act of vandalism on the local war memorial, Mr Yobb was savagely assaulted by Mrs Ethel Prunehat, who was armed with a dangerous weapon, viz a rolled up copy of Good News, the parish magazine of the combined nearby churches of St Ivel and St Bruno. Twenty-four officers supported the station's Armed Response Unit in successfully apprehending Mrs Prunehat with a 50,000-volt taser device, thus incapacitating her and preventing her from inflicting further injury on the complainant. The suspect was taken to the Neasden Mortuary for questioning, whilst Mr Yobb was offered counselling by the Victim Support Unit.

1200 hrs All officers reported for the Divisional Poker Tournament. This initiative is designed to promote institutional bonding between officers of all ranks. Regrettably, this left no one to man the station phone line, resulting in a number of members of the public claiming to have died because of a lack of police response to their pleas for help. A full internal inquiry has been launched into how these persons managed to obtain classified data (i.e. the station phone number).

1500 hrs Members of the press were issued with a formal apology for the manner in which certain officers carried out their investigations into the unsolved murder case involving the discovery of a body in the swimming pool belonging to a Mr B. (Barrymore). Officers conceded that there had been "a number of errors" in the handling of this unfortunate accident, but wished to make it clear that no errors had been committed by themselves. This distressing case remains firmly unsolved.

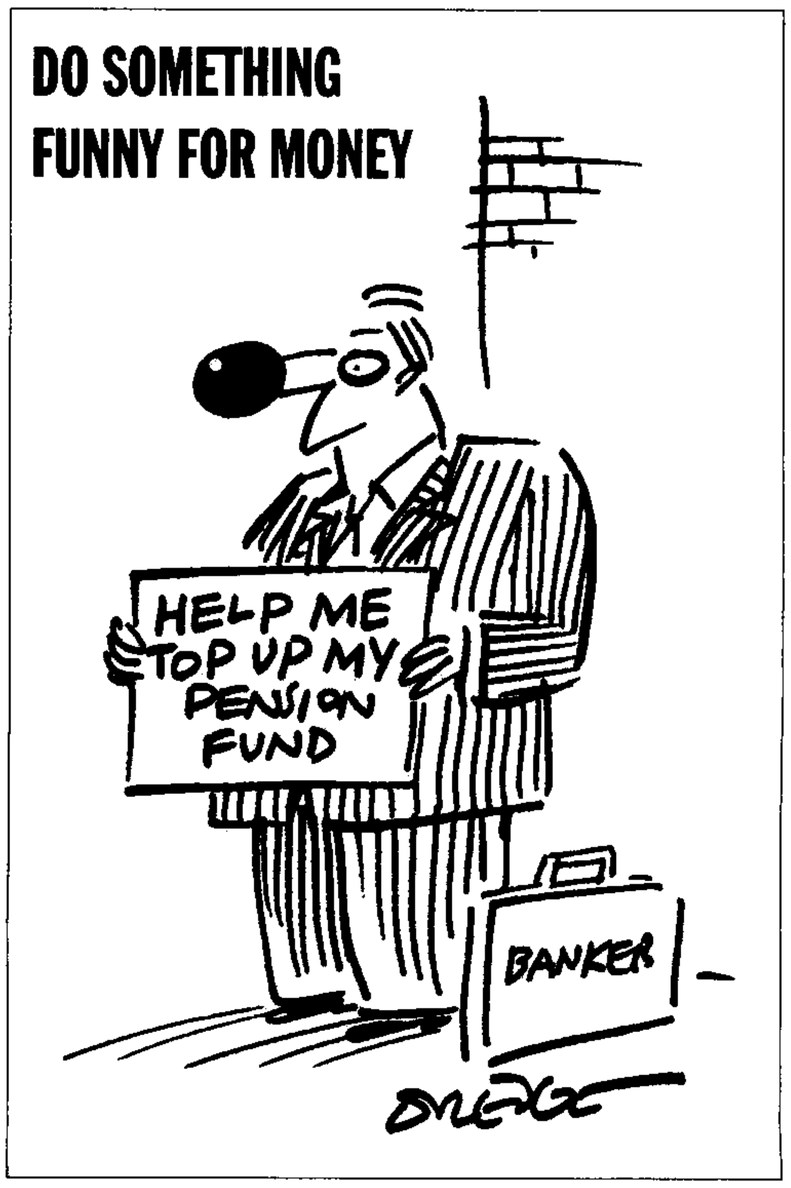
1800 hrs Officers deployed to special meeting convened at the Phuket Sauna and Massage Club, Morrison Road (formerly Safeway Road). As usual, officers travelled in two separate vans according to their ethnic origin – the Black Maria and the White Man Van. The race to arrive at our destination regrettably resulted in a number of fatalities involving those travelling in the Black Maria.

When the meeting finally got under way, the following matters were discussed:

1. The forthcoming "summer of discontent", creating social unrest and potential mass violence due to unemployment and global warming.

2. The likelihood of increased police overtime resulting from measures needing to be taken to respond to the above.

An informal light supper of lager and pork scratchings was then served by members of the local Polish community dressed in traditional Thai costumes.



The Queen Mum You'll Never See

by Our Art Correspondent **Baz Relief**

PRIVATE EYE can exclusively reveal the incredible story of "censorship from the top" which has denied the British public the right to see the late Queen Mother as she really was.

The behind the scenes row has come to light following the unveiling of a new 240-foot bronze statue of the widowed Queen Consort advertising her favourite tipple, "White Horse" whisky, which now stands on a hill overlooking Dover *(Surely in the Mall, London? Ed.)*.

The sculptor, Phil Plinth, 76, originally planned a series of 60-foot bas reliefs, showing the Queen Mother in a series of domestic scenes.

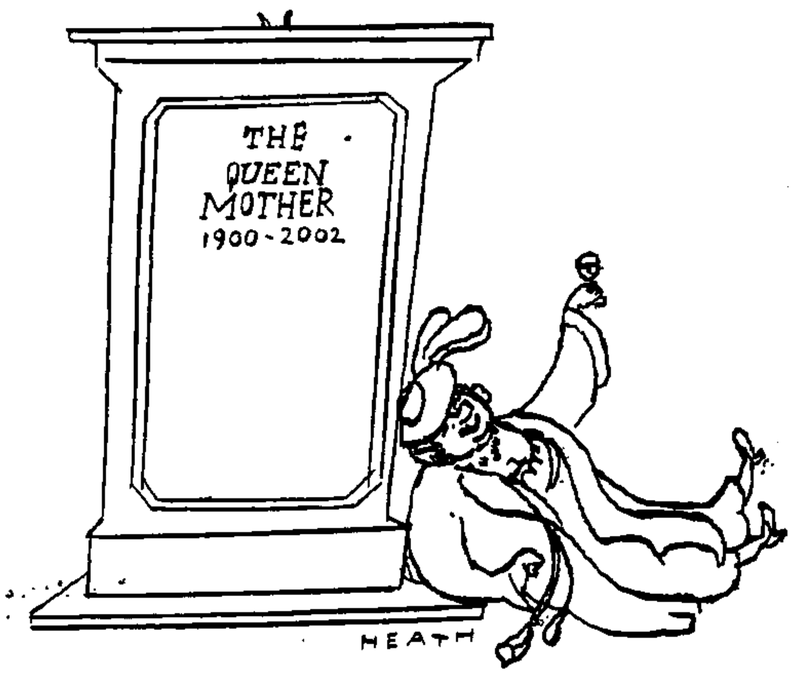
In one she is seen writing out a betting slip for the 3.30 at Uttoxeter.

In another she is shown seated, watching the race on television, while her faithful retainer "Backstairs Billy" pours her a glass of Dubonnet.

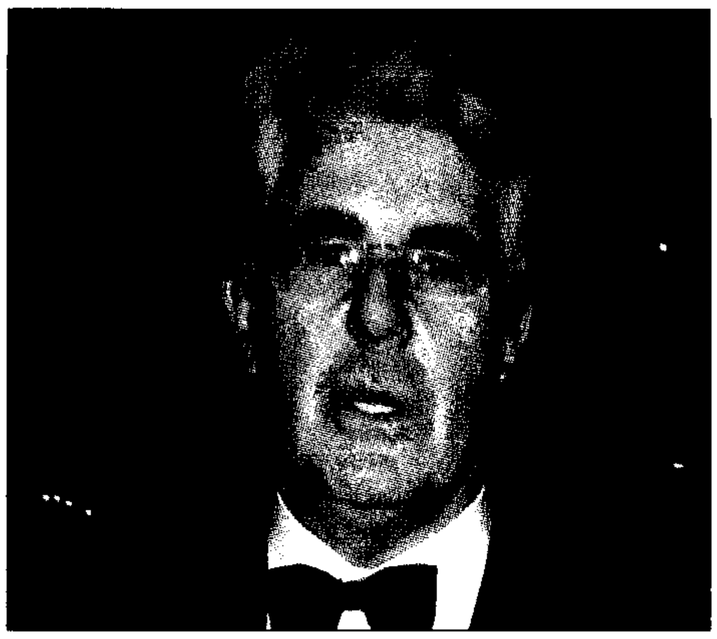
In a third she is seen in bed counting her winnings, as she tucks into a box of chocolates.

However none of these endearing scenes will be seen on the finished statue, as they were cruelly vetoed by

(cont. p. 94)



DIARY



MAX CLIFFORD

It's organised chaos in here, it really is. One minute, I've got some of the world's most prestige coffin manufacturers – we're talking mahogany here, teak, walnut, the lot – on the mobile offering Jade the most beautiful luxury farewell container in return for a positive merchandising opportunity, then on the landline I'm fielding calls from Mohamed Fayed saying Harrods will sponsor a brand new state-of-the-art deluxe kitchen-range for Jack Tweed and their lovely, lovely little mites, 'cos once the grieving's out the way believe me they're going to be in need of a good square meal with all the trimmings.

We're talking mutual product cross-fertilisation here. I scratch my back and you scratch mine. How do you think Elvis Presley got so big? All by himself? You must be joking! I'll never forget the day this young cowhand came into my office, this struggling kid in jeans and a dirty t-shirt. He said to me, Max, he said, my career's going nowhere and fast. Work your magic, Max. I'm a bit of a softy, so I took pity on the fellow and gave him a couple of great songs I'd just written. "They're yours for nothing – and good luck to you mate," I said. I then put a call through to a couple of friends in the music press who owed me a favour. Result? Elvis records Hound Dog and Heartbreak Hotel, he goes to the top of the hit parade and the rest, as they say, is history. And you know why it's history? A.J.P. Taylor was a client of mine back then, lovely historian, lovely guy, and he was after a bit of a PR-boost for his latest book, so I put him in touch with Elvis, and A.J.P. gave Elvis the best part of a chapter in his *Origins of the Second World War* and the sales went through the roof, and frankly Elvis was dead chuffed to get a mention alongside Churchill and Hitler and some of the all-time greats, and who can blame him?

Spool forward quarter of a century, and Elvis is found dead in the smallest room, tragedy on the toilet. First thing happens his manager, Colonel Tom Parker, lovely man, gives me a bell and says, I'll be straight with you Max. Elvis is sadly deceased, blah blah, we've got a fortnight's booking in Las Vegas, top-of-the-range venue, we need someone to fill the spot and sharpish or I'm up the proverbial creek. So I say, look, Tom, a client's just walked into my office, a real little belter, always gives it 110%, charisma, star quality, the lot. And that, my friend, is how Bonnie Langford became a mega-star. And of course my clients New Lenor homecare products, as was, were thrilled to bits as they were in partnership with Bonnie at the time. And the rest as they say is history.

Siamese twins knocked on my door last week, lovely couple of ladies, joined at the hip or wherever, saying we need the media attention, one of us has a tragic terminal illness, the other's struggling with a tragic drugs problem, we want to strike while the iron's hot, Max, so how can you help us? As luck would have it, that very morning my client and good friend Simon Cowell of X Factor fame had been on the mobile asking if I knew a pair of Siamese twins he could perform his magic on, so, swings and roundabouts, to cut a long story short I put Simon and the tragic Siameses in touch at a mutually agreed venue of my choice and bob's your uncle, the twins are lined up for major role on next season's X Factor, followed by an episode of their own on Celebrity Surgery, I can't tell you any more at this moment in time but believe me it'll be dynamite, and between ourselves I can't confirm anything but one of them's enjoying something of a fling with one of Stephen Lawrence's young killers, so that can't be bad, especially if a marriage should result, *Hello!* are interested, so's UK Living TV, you name it, sweetheart, we're talking mega-bucks, and it's nice to be able to put something back.

I'm sorry, but I've always found helping others hugely rewarding. Where do you think Nelson Mandela would be without the proverbial leg-up from yours truly? Right first time: tragically locked up behind bars. When Nelson got in touch with me, ooh, forty-odd years ago, I said, okay, Nelson, you're at a career low-point, give it to me straight, tell me what want to achieve and I'll tell you if it's feasible. He said he was looking to be out of prison and behind the President's desk in a decade or two, so I said, right, first task, build up public awareness, I'm looking to introduce you to people in TV, friends in the Press, movers and shakers in local radio, you name it, my friend. And of course, they absolutely loved him, they said, we've just got to have this guy for President, colourful shirts, lovely smile, high-pitched voice, the lot. I'd like to tell you the full story but I can't. Fast forward to the 1990s, and I was able to give a welcome boost to the careers of Kerry Katona and Michelle McManus, to name but two, by arranging a photo-shoot with the guy, who was then at the height of his popularity. It's a win-win situation. Fingers crossed we'll have Nelson attend Jade's funeral, maybe Bono too, the guy owes me one, plus Simon Cowell, baby-faced dad Alfie Patten and Celebrity Big Brother winner Ulrika Jonsson.

There's not enough compassion in our society and I intend to drag our politicians through the mud until we get it. Tug-of-love tots, to hell-and-back teenage mums, kiss-n-tell reality stars, there's an awful lot of lovely, lovely folk hurting out there, and a bit of extra cash in their pockets is always welcome.

I'll give you a for-instance. I was alongside a level-crossing in my limo the other day when I saw a young lady trapped in the way of an oncoming train, screaming.

"Tell me what you want to achieve, sweetheart," I said. "And I'll tell you what I can do to help." She told me there was a train hurtling towards her, and she desperately wanted to be rescued from the jaws of death. Fair's fair. My heart went out to her. But I had to tell her that, short term, she was looking at certain death. But long-term, we could probably earn the train-driver anything up to £100,000, and if he was looking for a career on the variety circuit I could introduce him to Des O'Connor, two members of Showaddywaddy and the showbiz editor of the *Daily Star*.

Very sadly the young lady died, but every cloud has a silver lining. The train driver's on Richard and Judy tomorrow and Piers Morgan the day after and we've already secured him a season in Weston-Super-Mare come the winter. You've got to put something back, you really have, and for me compassion's never been a dirty word.

As told to
CRAIG BROWN

Celeb

LIGGER

MADAM HAS ASKED ME TO TELL YOU THAT SHE'S VERY CONCERNED ABOUT YOUR LEVEL OF DRUG CONSUMPTION, SIR...
IT'S INCREASED MARKEDLY SINCE ALL THE ECONOMIC TURMOIL STARTED... YOU'RE TAKING MORE AND MORE...
I WOULDN'T SAY THAT I'M TAKING MORE DRUGS, JOHNSON...
I'D SAY IT WAS A QUANTITATIVE EASING OF MY DRUG SUPPLY. NOW SHUSH. I'M WATCHING NEWSNIGHT...

Literary Review

Living dud

Breaking Dawn
Stephanie Meyer
(Atom, £12.99)

IT TAKES but a glance at the *Bookseller*'s top twenty children's books roster to confirm the full extent of Stephanie Meyer's irresistible rise. For the past few weeks the top five has been entirely static: *New Moon* at one, *Eclipse* at two, *Breaking Dawn* at three, followed by *Twilight* at four and the latter's film tie-in bringing up the rear at five.

Between them, calculation insists, Ms Meyer's darlings are currently racking up sales of 100,000-plus copies a week. Even before last autumn's film, the paperback of *Twilight* had reprinted a small matter of 22 times. This is serious – so serious as to make other mega-sellers to look over their shoulders, and a piqued Stephen King to complain that Ms M can't write for a darn, or some such picturesque expression. How did it happen?

Essentially the house of Meyer deals in teen vampires. Think Anne Rice for the post-Potter, pre-*Hollyoaks* generation, the merest infinitesimal pinch of Bram Stoker endlessly diffused into a world of cell-phones, prom nights and high school gossip, all given a very faint touch of intellectual respectability by epigraphs from, among others, Shakespeare, the Bible and Edna St Vincent Millay. Ms Meyer, who stares winsomely from her inside back jackets, has an English degree; but as with many an exercise in high-class hokum, there isn't the slightest sign that she thinks what she's doing is amusing and/or parodic, and sincerity is the order of the day.

We first met Bella Swan, Meyer's eternally challenged heroine, back in *Twilight*, when, fetching up in the lost little town of Forks, Washington State, she bumped into the alluring figure of Edward Cullen (china-white skin, come-hither voice, unearthly powers etc). Several years and a thousand or so pages later, Ed – who's stayed 18 for the past 70 years – and Bella are getting hitched and every fang-merchant and shape-shifter worth his salt is in town for the beano.

From Bella's first gruesome dream and the back-story references to her thing with Jake, a 16-year-old local werewolf, you just *know* something will go wrong, and sure enough it turns out that the Cullens have an undertaking with the Quileutes – Jake's, er, *pack* – that they won't create another vampire. Unfortunately, things get very weird on the honeymoon, where Bella wakes up each morning looking as if she's been mauled by a boa-constrictor, Ed starts ripping up pillows and despite assurances that he can't procreate, wifey seems to be pregnant with some kind of succubus…

Relax, it all ends happily, just about. Two procedural points worth noting are that Ms Meyer's prose-style is, at its best, of the can-opener variety (engines starting up like "hunting panthers" and so on) and that there's a great deal of subliminal hilarity. This, inevitably, has to do with the fact that, while just itching to plump down on all fours and start howling at the moon, most of the cast converse in 21st century mall-speak, address each other as "bro" and complain, when asked to wear clothes and so forth, that "I'm out of practice with this human thing." But where, you might wonder, does all this stuff come from? And what is the nature of its appeal to teenagers who would otherwise be huddled up outside shopping centres or watching re-runs of *The Mighty Boosh*?

The answer, perhaps, is that it taps – in however minimalist a way – into that time-honoured children's literature conceit of the alternate world, in which brightly-hued fantasy lands exist side by side, and sometimes bleed into, an "ordinary" world whose inhabitants are blindly unaware of its presence. Bella's wedding is full of these stark comminglings of the down-home and the out-to-lunch ("Behind my human friends were my new cousins-in-law, the Denali vampire clan" etc) and the thread can be traced all the way back through Harry Potter and Philip Pullman to C.S. Lewis and beyond.

As to what it tells us about the punters, the indications are that the scientifically conceived, what-you-see-is-what-you-get notion of existence so beloved of clamorous contemporary rationalists is sadly inadequate. It wouldn't be entirely fanciful to regard *Breaking Dawn* as yet another well-disguised example of displaced religious sensibility looking for a home. Perhaps the only thing that can be said in its favour is that Richard Dawkins would loathe it.

Hamlet

Books & Bookmen

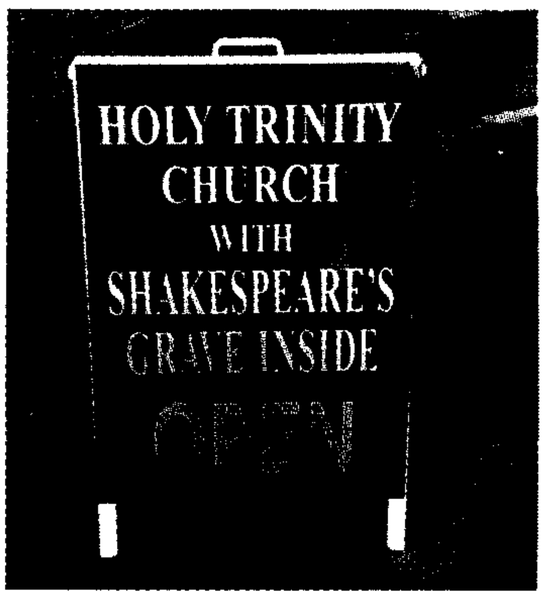
■ SO. Farewell then to the Hughes & Hughes bookshop at Heathrow, which has departed from Terminal 5 only a year after it opened. Four branches of Borders will also disappear from Heathrow and Gatwick in March.

More victims of the credit crunch? No; airport operator BAA has terminated both chains' leases in favour of an exclusive contract with WH Smug to handle book sales in the seven British airports it controls.

"This is a poor decision for the customer and the book buyer," complained Hughes & Hughes chief executive Derek Hughes to the *Bookseller* last week. Never fear, however – shoppers will still be able to enjoy the wide range of titles stocked by Smugs, including their Books of the Week (cost to publishers: £25,000), their Deal of the Week (£15,000) or even one of their choices for Travel Front of Store (£3,500-£4,000).

Meanwhile one exclusive deal that is now off the table is that between Sceptre and Waterstone's, which was set to be the only retailer allowed to stock hardbacks of *Sunnyside*, Glen David Gold's sequel to bestseller *Carter Beats the Devil*, due in July. Following an outcry from independent booksellers – who would not have been allowed their bite of the cherry until October, when the trade paperback is released – Tim Hely Hutchinson, chief executive of Sceptre's parent company Hachette UK, took to the airwaves on Radio 4 to announce that the deal was off. Moreover, it had been a mistake by "entrepreneurial colleagues". Who they? The letter which announced to independent booksellers that "retailer exclusives" like the *Sunnyside* deal were part of "a wide range of new approaches" that Sceptre would be adopting was from sales and marketing director James Spackman.

Recipients should thank their lucky stars it was at least a bookshop he chose for his unsuccessful experiment. When Spackman was appointed last October, he was given the brief "to build substantially John Murray's and Sceptre's representation and sales in mass-market accounts such as WH Smith and the supermarkets."

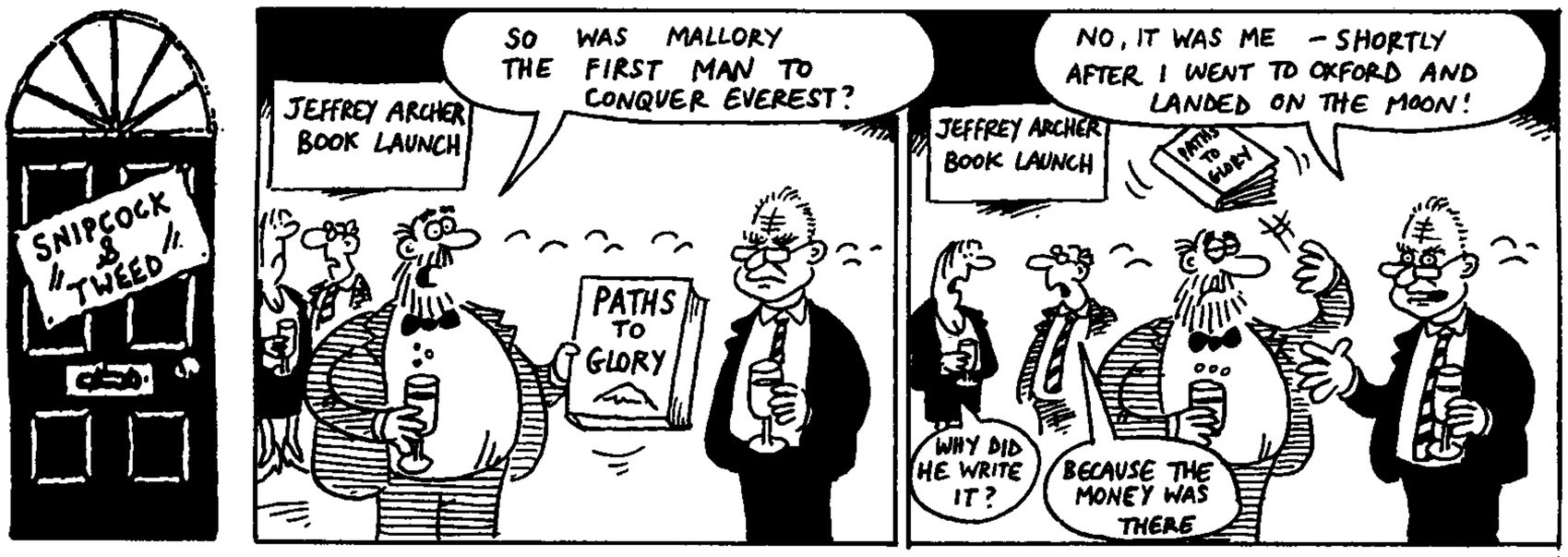


Submitted by Ric Hayden

■ THE Orwell Prizes for political writing are notably high-minded: this year's list of titles submitted for the book award but deemed ineligible on ethical grounds (because they were "written by members of the Media Standards Trust, Orwell Trust, the Political Quarterly board and our judging panel in 2008") could easily be a strong non-fiction prize shortlist itself, including as it does well-reviewed works by Lawrence Freedman, David Marquand, Ferdinand Mount, Andrew O'Hagan, Robert Peston and Polly Toynbee & David Walker.

However, Orwell himself, had he been able to see last week's longlist, might still have raised an ethical eyebrow.

The judges – who include Mount, Ian Jack and prize director Jean Seaton – snubbed big books by big names (eg Adam Boulton, Michael Burleigh, Niall Ferguson, George


SNIPCOCK & TWEED
JEFFREY ARCHER BOOK LAUNCH
SO WAS MALLORY THE FIRST MAN TO CONQUER EVEREST?
PATHS TO GLORY
JEFFREY ARCHER BOOK LAUNCH
NO, IT WAS ME – SHORTLY AFTER I WENT TO OXFORD AND LANDED ON THE MOON!
PATHS TO GLORY
WHY DID HE WRITE IT?
BECAUSE THE MONEY WAS THERE

Monbiot, Chris Patten and the late Hugo Young), often in favour of quirkier first-person projects. Among the latter are three titles from Granta (by Andrew Brown, Eva Figes and Sara Maitland), where Jack was formerly magazine editor, and one from its sister imprint Portobello – giving the indy outfit more entries than any other house except mighty Penguin, Seaton's publisher. Bloomsbury, responsible for Mount's *Cold Cream*, scored two nods.

If the organisers got themselves in a pickle, however, they weren't alone. Bloomsbury was daft to submit *Cold Cream* if Mount had already been appointed, while his agreement to be a judge in a year when it would otherwise have been eligible seems even barmier.

All the publishers who submitted fiction (including works by Sebastian Barry, Linda Grant, Zoë Heller, Philip Hensher and Will Self) were wasting their time, meanwhile, as not one novel made the longlist. But the biggest mugs of all were Headline, for submitting Carol Thatcher's moronically titled *A Swim-On Part in the Goldfish Bowl*, and Michael Joseph, for thinking Ross Kemp's TV spin-off *Gangs II* had a chance – though admittedly it would have been fun to see the ex-*EastEnders* hardman taking on the likes of Patrick Cockburn, Nick Davies, Tony Judt and David Runciman.

■ IT'S 475 years since Henry VIII granted Cambridge University Press letters patent to print "all manner of books", and the publisher is marking 425 years of continuous publishing in Cambridge with a grand garden party in July.

It's also marking the anniversary by axing the vast majority of its 170 printing staff and outsourcing much of their work abroad. CUP says changes in technology and the shift away from paper-based publishing mean the Cambridge-based printing business would be running at a loss. Books destined for the international market will be printed abroad. More than 150 jobs are to go from the printing division and the UK education publishing team.

■ RICHARD Webster's highly critical account of what he calls "The Great Children's Home Panic" in North Wales is to be reissued in paperback.

The Secret of Bryn Estyn – The Making of a Modern Witch Hunt is on sale again, this time with a new postscript on "Journalism, Jersey and the Idea of Evil" which equates the press coverage of the Jersey care home saga with the previous North Wales investigations.

Webster, not content with pillorying the role of the press in general and *Private Eye* in particular, has also been planning a drama documentary based on his controversial book in which he has been suggesting that the *Eye*'s editor should play the part of himself *(That's enough Webster. Ed.)*

'Bookworm'

LIBRARY NEWS

■ MORE public libraries are being closed as local councils blame the credit crunch for their budget woes.

Shadow culture minister Ed Vaizey submitted an early-day motion in the Commons condemning the closure of 11 libraries in Wirral by the Lib Dem/Labour coalition *(Eyes passim)* as "cost-driven vandalism". But his fellow Tories on Conservative-run Swindon council then voted last week to close four of the town's libraries to find savings of £100,000.

Meanwhile, in Labour-controlled Nottingham, Top Valley and Bestwood branch libraries have just received their death sentence, and even the city's Central Library is to stop opening on Fridays to save staff costs.

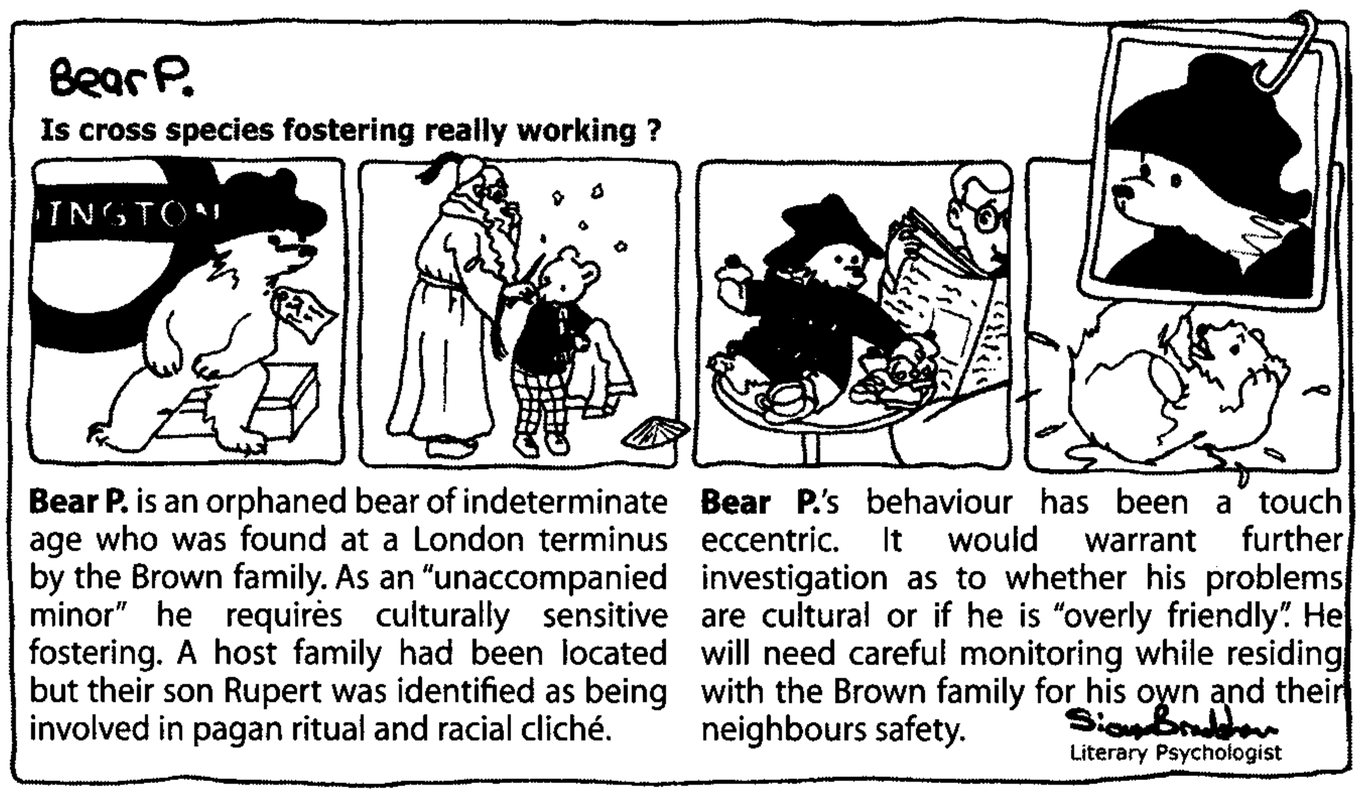
UNIVERSITY NEWS

■ TWO Swedish academics who wrote an article in an academic journal deriding voice-stress detectors, like those used to catch benefit cheats in the UK, have been threatened with libel action if they raise concerns about the technology again.

Israeli company Nemesysco is one of the companies selling such "lie detectors", which monitor stress in the voices of telephone callers. However, the peer-reviewed article, in the December issue of *The International Journal of Speech, Language and the Law* , entitled "Charlatanry in forensic speech science", says of Nemesysco's claims: "One would assume that such extraordinary discoveries must be widely published and discussed, but the fact of the matter seems to be that they are completely unknown to the scientific community."

Nemesysco contacted the journal's publisher, Equinox, which has now removed the full article from its website and only carries the abstract (which doesn't name the firm), plus a statement explaining that it has received a complaint that the article was highly defamatory and was "prepared without reference to" Nemesysco or its founder Amir Liberman.

The authors, linguistics professor Francisco Lacerda from Stockholm University and phonetics professor Anders Eriksson from the University of Gothenburg, also received letters warning that they could be sued for defamation if they wrote about Nemesysco again. While the curtailment of academic publishing freedom is infuriating the scientists, it's not the only thing that really worries them. In a statement put out by Stockholm University, Professor Lacerda said: "The biggest problem is the completely bizarre use that the authorities and insurance companies in Britain make of these pseudo-detectors."


Bear P.
Is cross species fostering really working ?
Bear P. is an orphaned bear of indeterminate age who was found at a London terminus by the Brown family. As an "unaccompanied minor" he requires culturally sensitive fostering. A host family had been located but their son Rupert was identified as being involved in pagan ritual and racial cliché.
Bear P.'s behaviour has been a touch eccentric. It would warrant further investigation as to whether his problems are cultural or if he is "overly friendly". He will need careful monitoring while residing with the Brown family for his own and their neighbours safety.
Literary Psychologist

I have a chicken bone that Damien Hirst once stuck in the end of his foreskin. It's like a holy relic. I'll never put it on eBay.

SAM TAYLOR-WOOD,
Observer Magazine

Zac Goldsmith strides across the mud, very tall and angular in a slightly tatty Savile Row suit, like a politician from an age when young men strived to look old. The land becomes him. It befits his graceful manners and aristocratic bearing, his bespoke brand of environmentalism and Conservative politics…'You're dealt a hand in life, you play it' he says. 'You're dealt a really good hand, you should play it even better. My understanding of being a Conservative is someone who leaves the world a better place than they found it…' *[continues for quite some while]*

JANICE TURNER meets ZAC GOLDSMITH, *The Times*

Pseuds Corner

It's like some vast red blood blister bursting into the space…Are you disappearing down an endoscope into your own body, observing the bulging of some tumorous growth, or are you gazing through a telescope out towards the stars. Can emptiness become an object? Can the monumental be immaterial? At one point does a something come into being and at what point does it vanish into complete non-existence?

RACHEL CAMPBELL-JOHNSTON on Anish Kapoor's sculpture 'Past, Present, Future', *The Times*

The first time I saw one of [Anish] Kapoor's unmixed pigment pieces at the ICA, I could have melted to the floor with colourist joy.

WALDEMAR JANUSZCZAK,
Sunday Times

The Popemobile is a rare object that exists at the intersection of different object-orders. On one hand it is part of the contemporary product-language of car design, but it's also related to an older order of things where objects were thought of as invested with supernatural qualities. Its hybrid culture seems to span disparate influences, including futurist auto-philia, luxury car design, Catholic heraldic symbolism, Archigramesque moving architecture and Star Wars Stormtrooper styling.

Architect's Journal

Joanie's arse, for those who have not yet stared at it, is a deathless item. In a world full of skimmed-milk, bony-ass women with the buttocks of children, Joanie's arse is a clarion-call, a timpani roll – the oiled man banging the gong at the start of Rank films. It's an arse you want to throw a carnival for. It has become totemic among the womenfolk of the world. It is our O-bum-a…*[continues]*

CAITLIN MORAN reviews 'Mad Men', *The Times*

CONTRIBUTORS: Everyone, Brenda Bishop, Nick Booth, James Spinlove, Diana Beatty, Anon.

£10 paid for all entries

IN THE BACK

AT HOME WITH LORD ROTHERMERE

Our top tax man and the non-dom press baron

IF AN Englishman's home is his castle, a sprawling neo-Palladian pile in the rolling Wiltshire countryside might be expected to bring with it full British tax status for the lord of the manor. But not, it seems, when the Englishman in question is an immensely wealthy and powerful press baron who enjoys the protection of the country's top taxman.

Back in 1999 the young chairman of the Daily Mail and General Trust, the 4th Viscount Rothermere, aka Jonathan Harmsworth, bought a 220-acre estate called Ferne Park as home for his family, then comprising wife Claudia and two children under six.

By 2001 a new Ferne House had been built in the grounds to a £40m design by renowned Palladian-style architect Quinlan Terry. As the latest generation of the Rothermere dynasty expanded to four children by 2004, the Harmsworths had outgrown Terry's first effort and in August 2006, local council records show, obtained planning permission for "new east and west wings".

Despite a reported personal fortune of around £800m, Viscount Rothermere turned to his bankers for loans. Last month, under a regulatory amnesty following the well-publicised failure of Carphone Warehouse boss and Tory backer David Ross to declare his use of shares as security for personal loans, Rothermere came clean on his own similar arrangements. It emerged that in December 2006 he had pledged 8m DMGT shares he owned through a trust and DMGT's Bermudan parent company Rothermere Continuation Ltd. At the time these were worth more than £50m, though DMGT's announcement of the arrangement stated that this greatly exceeded the value of the loans. It was, however, "small when compared to the Viscount Rothermere's net worth".

Borrowing money rather than using some of his offshore wealth had one clear benefit for Rothermere, an advantage he owed to his famous father Vere Harmsworth, the 3rd Viscount Rothermere. By living as a tax exile in Paris for most of his life, the 3rd Viscount had become "non-domiciled" for British tax purposes. And just like his hereditary title, this status passed – as a "domicile of origin" – to Jonathan when he was born in 1967. A DMGT spokesman would only say the 4th Viscount's domicile status was "a private matter".

Ferne House, a non-dom's country...er...domicile

The principal tax break for a "non-dom" is that overseas income is only taxable when "remitted" to Britain. For Jonathan Harmsworth this has proved immensely valuable, as the hundreds of millions of pounds in DMGT dividends channelled over the years through Bermudan-registered Rothermere Continuation Ltd into trusts of which he and his family are beneficiaries have magically become overseas income. Had this money been brought into the UK to pay for the new home in Wiltshire, it would have been taxable: the loan from the bank, on the other hand, would not.

But being a "non-dom" should not be so easy. The archaic status, used in British tax law since the Napoleonic wars, has to be sustained throughout a non-dom's life by an overriding commitment to another country. This must be demonstrated by such choices as the location of the family home, upbringing of children and a person's intended final resting place. As Harmsworth looks to have made a permanent family seat on the Wiltshire-Dorset borders, and he and his wife have reportedly become leading figures on the county scene, his non-dom status looks precarious to say the least.

These developments, coupled with a strong court of appeal win for HM Revenue & Customs on a domicile case last year, proving the importance of where a person is committed to live with his family, unsurprisingly prompted an official re-think of the viscount's status. Inspectors were busy investigating his media empire anyway, under "Project Mersey", after the group had earned itself a place on HMRC's "high risk corporates" list by undertaking a number of tax avoidance schemes.

According to sources close to the review, the decision of HMRC's Special Civil Investigation's section was to launch a full-scale inquiry with a view to withdrawing Harmsworth's non-dom status, if necessary through the courts. Late last year the plan was approved by HMRC's solicitors and a high-level strategy board comprising the directors of the department's Large Business Service, its Anti-Avoidance Group and its central policy unit.

But then the investigation was blocked by HMRC deputy chairman Dave Hartnett, who regularly steps into tax investigations and boasted to a parliamentary committee a year ago of his "board-to-board engagement" with big business.

When Austin Mitchell MP then asked Hartnett "Do [large companies] get a better deal when you get involved?" Hartnett responded "I sincerely hope not." Viscount Rothermere appears to have got superior treatment, though, as Hartnett pressured HMRC officials to find a "technical" reason for not pursuing the investigation.

Why the HMRC boss should be so keen to let Viscount Rothermere off the hook, saving him several millions of pounds in tax annually, at the expense of the little people, remains a mystery. There is no evidence that the *Mail's* political clout – or its editor and director Paul Dacre's close relationship with Gordon Brown – played a part. Nor is there any indication that the connection between DGMT and HMRC director-general Melanie Dawes, whose remit covers the Large Business Service, had any bearing on the decision. Dawes, a career Treasury civil servant said by some to have been drafted into HMRC to keep an eye on the taxmen, just happens to be married to Benedict Brogan, who until last month was political editor of the *Daily Mail*.

PS: The *Eye* and others have long pointed to the numbers of non-dom Labour party friends and donors in seeking to explain the government's failure to scrap a tax break it once vehemently opposed (last year it settled on a pin-prick £30k annual charge for non-dom status). Perhaps we should have been looking elsewhere in the political forest too.

LOST AT SEA

Banks a lot

LOSING a loved one at sea is devastating enough; but after infamous cases of fraud, like that of Anne and John Darwin, who faked Mr Darwin's canoe death to claim insurance money, life has become even more difficult for the genuinely bereaved.

Last November fisherman Colin Dolby (pictured) became caught up in sudden severe weather off Shoeburyness, Essex, and phoned his father to say he was returning to port. But he failed to turn up and three days later his 40ft trawler, the Louisa, was found on the seabed, a mile offshore in the Thames estuary.

Extensive searches failed to find the body of the 47-year-old father of four whose family had been fishermen for generations. He left a widow, Jane, their daughter and son aged eight and four, and Jane's two older children to whom he was step-father.

Police and maritime investigators have no doubt Mr Dolby was lost at sea. His mobile phone signal was traced to very near the spot where his boat sank; there were no other vessels in the vicinity at the time; the damage to his boat was typical of storm damage; and the freak bad weather had not been forecast to come in until much later. Four days after Mr Dolby's disappearance, Essex police put out a statement saying: "The missing skipper is now considered to be lost at sea."

If the shock of his loss were not bad enough for Jane and the four children, trying to deal with the family finances has been a nightmare. Without a body or coroner's certificate, Mr Dolby is still listed as "missing" and Jane has been unable to claim insurance, stop debt accumulating on his credit cards or claim benefit as a widowed parent.

Her husband had been expecting a substantial sum in compensation for losing his fishing livelihood to make way for the Thames Gateway project, and had run up three credit card debts in anticipation, totalling around £20,000. He and Jane had hoped to invest the money in converting his trawler for business and pleasure trips. Instead their only asset is gone and his credit cards bills from Mint (RBS), the Halifax and Citibank have piled up. Efforts to put them on hold have been thwarted by a refusal by staff to discuss his affairs with her, citing the data protection act because she is not the card-holder. They refused to discuss the amounts owing and declined her suggestion that they call Essex police to confirm her husband's fate.

"Huge fees and charges are being applied monthly because obviously he cannot make his monthly repayments. And nor can I," she said. Initially she said she met with a "similar lack of compassion" from insurance company Direct Line with whom she and her husband had taken out a joint life policy. She says she was told she would need a death certificate and that in the meantime she would have to continue making monthly payments. After further calls a sympathetic staff member was now processing her claim.

The *Eye* contacted the banks. Citibank said these were unusual circumstances, but it was desperately sorry for what had happened to Mrs Dolby and "it would try to resolve matters as soon as possible". Mint said: "We have already started an investigation into Mrs Dolby's case, and will contact her in the next couple of days to ensure her problems are resolved satisfactorily." Halifax said it had now frozen interest while awaiting confirmation that Mr Dolby was missing.

In the meantime Mrs Dolby survives on the small amounts she earns doing part-time work and on donations from her local church and the Fishermen's Mission.

CONTAMINATED BLOOD

It's still a bloody scandal

PRIVATE EYE has for years chronicled the struggle of haemophiliacs to secure a public inquiry into arguably the worst treatment scandal in the history of the NHS. Given contaminated blood products in the 1970s and 1980s, they have been sentenced to death or debilitating illness such as liver cancer and cirrhosis.

Some of those whose stories we recounted have since died: people like Peter Longstaff, who was infected with both HIV and hepatitis C and learned even when he was in late-stage liver failure that he had also – more recently – received blood contaminated with variant CJD.

Mr Longstaff was one of around 4,800 haemophiliacs who received blood products imported from the United States which had come from high risk prisoners, drug addicts and others on "skid row" who sold their blood. Long after warnings first sounded about the dangers, the British government continued to buy from the US, having failed to fund safe production in the UK. Fatally the contaminated blood clotting factor was even given to those with only mild haemophilia (who arguably did not need it), as well as to those at greater risk. Of the 1,200 who contracted HIV from the blood, only about 370 survive today. Aids and hepatitis C have killed around 1,800 in total, children as well as adults, and the numbers are rising.

So what a disappointment that when, finally, there is a public inquiry, it pulls all its punches.

The Archer report, published last week, finds no one to blame for ignoring warnings back in the early 70s about high risk blood. No one is held accountable for carrying out secret tests for infection on the haemophiliac guinea pigs – or, worse, not telling them the catastrophic results, thus putting families at risk. No one was apparently at fault for cynically drawing up contracts for haemophiliacs to receive a "compassion" payment for HIV infection, which included a "waiver" of rights to any more funds should they contract any other infection, when health officials already knew they may have contracted hepatitis C, but haemophiliacs themselves did not.

But the fault does not lie with the "independent" inquiry team, led by Lord Archer of Sandwell, the former solicitor-general. The inquiry was set up *despite* the government, not because of it. Funded by charity and donations, without any legal status and with no power to subpoena witnesses or demand disclosure of evidence, it was handicapped from the start. The panel members gave their time for free; they had no counsel; the hemophiliacs had no representation and there was only one solicitor to do the inquiry's admin.

Thus it is that no health minister, official or medic from those who ignored warnings about contaminated imports, or those who sanctioned secret testing or derisory payments, gave evidence. The government did hand over some documents, but as *Eye* readers will know, much has already been shredded. Even now, despite the deaths and devastated lives, the government still argues that some documents remain "commercially confidential". By contrast, Ireland, Canada, France and Germany held genuine public inquiries and set up generous compensation schemes. Some even launched criminal prosecutions.

What the Archer report does make clear is that contaminated blood and clotting factors continued to be given to thousands of people up to and beyond 1985, when heat treatment introduced to combat HIV was also by chance found to eradicate hepatitis C. But the medical journal, the *Lancet*, had reported as long ago as 1974 that a new hepatitis virus (then called non A non B and later to become Hep C) had been isolated and was responsible for 90 percent of transfusion-associated illness in the US. In the same year one of America 's leading blood specialists warned the UK against American imports: "It does not take much commercial blood to bring up an astounding infection rate from one that is relatively unnoticed."

Despite then health secretary Dr David Owen promising Britain would be self-sufficient in safer blood products by 1977, resources were never forthcoming. Not only were our main blood laboratories incapable of meeting largescale demand, but they were starved of funds and the Blood Products Laboratory at Elstree was deemed so unsafe that, had it been a private concern, it would have been closed. Thus dodgy blood continued to be brought in from abroad.

In 1983 alarm bells were rung again, when Spence Galbraith of the Public Health Laboratory Service said US plasma should be withdrawn from hospital shelves because of the risk of AIDS to haemophiliacs, after cases had been documented in both the US and Spain. Again nothing was done and no-one held to account.

Instead, in 1990 those known to have subsequently contracted HIV were offered "sympathy payments" of between £20,000 and £60,000 to settle their claim for damages, with no admission of liability. As many of them then believed they had little time to live, they accepted. But under threat of having the offer withdrawn, they also had to sign a waiver saying they would not sue for hepatitis C. As that is a "slow burn" disease, none of them knew they might be developing the disease at that stage. Evidently those responsible for advising and drawing up the document must have known. Subsequently a separate fund was also established for those suffering ill health, liver failure and cancer from Hep C.

Carol Grayson and Peter Longstaff

To this day, the payments are woefully inadequate, too complex, dependent upon age and onset of infection and pay out to some dependent spouses but not others. The payments are a fraction of those paid in other countries and consign most sufferers to poverty.

Other factors affecting the more recent treatment of haemophilacs were not addressed by the Archer inquiry. Why, for example, as recently as the beginning of this decade when safe but more expensive synthetic clotting agents were given to children, were they not also made available to adults? Thus some haemophiliacs, already given a deadly cocktail of viruses, found as recently as 2002 that they had been products containing vCJD.

One such victim at the time, 34-year-old Mick Mason, who has HIV, hepatitis B and C, learned that he has also been exposed to 40 doses of nvCJD. He told the *Eye*: "The fact that synthetic treatments are given to children, shows that there must be some risk in blood products. No doubt health ministers think that as we are already infected with so many viruses, we are not worth spending the money on – a case of go away and die and stop worrying us."

Carol Grayson, who nursed her partner Peter Longstaff until his death, launched Haemophilia Action UK and has amassed a wealth of embarrassing documents revealing how successive governments failed Britain's haemophiliacs and is continuing a legal battle for compensation against the US blood companies on Peter's behalf.

She told the *Eye* campaigners were very grateful to the anonymous donors and to the panel for holding the inquiry and welcomed its recommendations, but added: "We regret that the Archer report does not have any legal jurisdiction, so that it is worded in such a way that no authorities or individuals are named and shamed. Where else in public life could so many deaths still be dismissed as an 'unavoidable accident' by government when almost all the evidence in this case points to alleged dangerous practices and systematic blood policy failures?"

POLICE 5

Cash of interests

POLICE chiefs are set to spend more than £300,000 of taxpayers' money to help forces resist freedom of information requests – much of which will be spent paying for office space from a company run by… police chiefs!

The Central Referral Unit (CRU) was set up to "coordinate national and high profile FOI requests". It provides staff training and support forces that are resisting releasing information through the Information Tribunal system.

The unit was initially funded by contributions from police forces but is now wholly run from the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) budget and last year cost £186,000. Until last year it was provided with free office space at police sites in Hampshire, but according to documents seen by the *Eye*, "an opportunity arose which enabled the unit to move to the new ACRO [*the ACPO Criminal Records Office*] building situated in Whitely, Hants. Although accommodation costs have been minimal to date, there is now a requirement for the unit to share costs based on their actual usage of the premises, staff and other facilities." As a result CRU's budget requirement for 2009-10 is now £314,600.

ACRO is a subsidiary company of ACPO whose activities include selling police certificates for visa applications. ACRO was recently revealed to be charging up to £70 for a 70p search of the Police National Computer. Although ACPO is a not-for-profit company and police chiefs get no share dividend from it, the company provides lucrative employment for ex-senior coppers.

SOUTH WALES

Dai is cast

PRESSURE is mounting on the Welsh assembly government to hold a proper investigation into Inspector Dai Knacker's spectacularly bad record on miscarriages of justice (*Eyes passim*) following the conviction in February of John Pope for the 1996 murder of Karen Skipper.

Cardiff city council has backed a motion to call for a Home Office-funded public inquiry into South Wales Police, who in the last 25 years have had 11 murder convictions overturned.

At Cardiff crown court, in the second trial of the Karen Skipper murder case, more details emerged of how South Wales Police had tried to put another innocent man behind bars a decade earlier. Pope's trial heard the prosecution allege that police had suspected him in their original investigation but discarded clues because they were convinced that Mrs Skipper's husband Phillip had murdered her, despite the lack of evidence.

In pursuing Mr Skipper, who endured a five-week trial before he was cleared by a jury, Dai Knacker ignored the fact that workmates had identified Pope from an e-fit photo on the television programme *Crimewatch*. And they also failed to make any connection between eye witness evidence of a man being seen near the site of the murder wearing a waxed coat and the fact that Pope owned such a coat. When it also emerged that Pope's wife had told the police that he had abused her and forced her to have sex with her hands tied behind her back, they still failed to make any link with Karen Skipper, whose body was found half naked with her hands tied behind her back.

It was only when DNA was taken from Pope after he committed another crime a decade later that they discovered the match with a tiny spot of blood on Karen's jeans. They had dismissed the evidence of the blood in the original investigation because the blood type had not been matched with either Karen or Phillip Skipper.

In the Back continues overleaf ➤

DEFENCE SPECIAL

HEARTS AND MINDS

BAE and the human touch

BRITISH arms firm BAE Systems' move into less orthodox areas of military contracting has enmeshed it in one of the more bizarre failures of the "war on terror".

Last year BAE won a $40m contract to supply the US army with... anthropologists. As "prime contractor" for the "Human Terrain System", the idea was to provide people rather than tanks or planes to help the US fight a "clever" and more, er, "culturally aware" war in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Anthropologists are central to the Human Terrain System and to the thinking of US General David Petraeus, who believes victory in Iraq and Afghanistan will only come by winning over cultural, tribal and religious groups as well as through the use of guns and bombs. But the initiative, with BAE's help, has not done well and some of the staff on the BAE programme have been very odd indeed.

In November the FBI arrested one subcontractor on the scheme, a translator called Issam Hamama, and accused him having been "Agent 6129" who spied for Saddam Hussein's Baath regime in the 1990s by keeping tabs on groups and individuals in Washington. He denies the charges.

Meanwhile in Afghanistan, a BAE Human Terrain subcontractor, Don Ayala, who worked as part of a security detail, has been arrested and pleaded guilty to manslaughter following an incident near Kandahar in November. A BAE anthropologist, Paula Loyd, was killed while distributing sweets to children in an Afghan village after an Afghani, Abdul Salam, doused her in petrol and set fire to her. Ayala helped catch and restrain Salam; but when he learned how badly Loyd had been burned, he put a gun to Salam's head and – even though he was restrained in plastic handcuffs – shot him dead.

BAE told *Private Eye* that the "the dedication and professionalism of the other approximately 300 HTS employees" and the sacrifice of their three employees killed on operations "do not deserve to have the entire programme characterised by the actions of just two subcontractors".

BAE pays its Human Terrain anthropologists up to $300,000 a year, but the American Anthropological Association has voted against joining the scheme. The association said it was mindful both of the grim history of anthropologists helping the US army during the Vietnam war, and the widespread belief that the use of dogs, women's underwear and sexual humiliation during abusive interrogations of Iraqis was based on anthropological theories put forward in a controversial book called *The Arab Mind* by Raphael Patai.

BAE's recruitment methods have also raised questions. Many of their staff are not Arabic or Pashto speakers; some have not completed PhDs; and some were even recruited after brief telephone interviews. *Newsweek* reported that Human Terrain staffers in Iraq included a Latin America specialist, an authority on Native Americans and one who was writing a PhD thesis on, er, America's goth, punk and rave subcultures.

BAE said that it was not responsible for selecting anthropologists in the first year of the scheme: the US government picked the candidates.

HELICOPTERS

Blades of contention

DESPITE a glowing review of military trauma care by the Healthcare Commission, problems persist on the frontline.

After years of experience in Northern Ireland, the British army prides itself on its expertise in dealing with roadside bombs. But the rising casualties in Afghanistan caused by such IEDs (improvised explosive devices) has highlighted a serious weakness: a lack of helicopters.

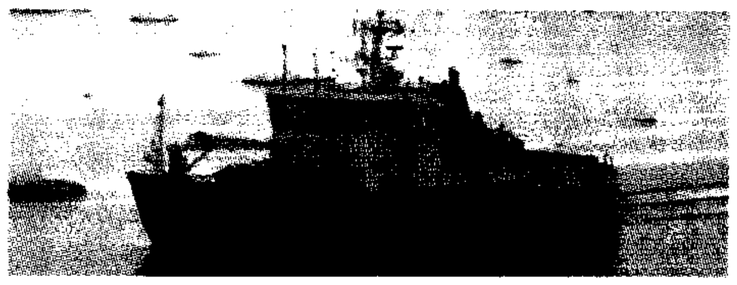
In Northern Ireland the IRA's use of IEDs led commanders to rely on helicopters to move personnel between AOs (areas of operation). That option is much less viable in Afghanistan. The RAF has 40 operational troop-carrying Chinooks, but only nine of them are deployed in the 'Stan. One of these is always unavailable due to maintenance, not least to remove the 400kg of sand that collects in every nook and cranny after service.

There are a few other helicopter types available, including Merlins, but these are limited by their inability to operate in heat and at altitude.

The lack of helicopters is causing another difficulty. The MoD refuses to compare current conflicts and Vietnam, but one statistic is revealing. During the Vietnam war, virtually all wounded patients were airlifted, usually by helicopter, to hospitals within one to two hours of injury. According to a "casualty evacuation timelines report" released by the Royal Army Medical Corps, evacuation times for Afghanistan in 2007 were up to 2hr 54min, sometimes much longer when already scarce helicopters were unavailable.

With longer flight delays, despite the heroic in-flight intervention of medics, IED casualties are at greater risk of more serious "life-changing" complications or death before they reach hospital.

'Squarebasher'



SHIPS

Sinking feeling

THE navy seems to have been careless with one of its ships, HMS Endurance, the icebreaker which ran into trouble off the coast of Chile before Christmas.

The Ministry of Defence downplayed difficulties, letting out only a trickle of information after the ship lost power and 10 people had to be rescued. On 17 December it described the incident on board as "an engine room flood".

By 23 December this had become "an unfortunate incident when the engine room became flooded with sea water…". But on 17 January the truth finally began to emerge, with a statement revealing a "very serious flooding incident… all propulsion and most auxiliary systems were lost…"

But even that didn't reveal the full story, which is rather more serious. A decision was taken to change sea water filters while underway in the Magellan Straits, rather than in dry dock or shallows as is usually the case for Endurance. During the procedure a sea cock failed causing an immediate and unstoppable flow of sea water into the engine room. Attempts to plug the leak failed and water began to fill the ship, up to and including the first accommodation level (C Deck). The ship then began to sink seriously low into the water. While a Chilean navy tug stood by, frantic efforts were made to recover the situation by the ship's executive officer (the captain was not on board). Finally a decision was made to give up the lower decks as lost. As this included the engine room, HMS Endurance, the UK's only ice breaker and its only maritime presence around the Falkland Islands, was towed to port by the Chilean navy.

The mooted cost of repairs go up to £150m; and if the ship wasn't already scheduled for a major refit, it is likely the vessel would have been written off.

Last summer, in a much lauded "first", Endurance stayed away from the UK for its essential annual maintenance. Instead of steaming home to Portsmouth, she was given to South African weapons giant Armscor at Simons Town. Investigators will no doubt now be scrutinising the maintenance records from this exciting new venture.

COMMON LAW

Cops and cobblers

THREE senior judges have criticised the government for "sweeping away in a side wind" centuries of common law, established to protect citizens from oppressive policing and arbitrary arrest.

Their lordships' barely concealed contempt was directed at ill-conceived legislation hastily introduced in the wake of tabloid hysteria over the case of Tony Martin, the farmer who shot a burglar as he fled Martin's property. The legislation was designed to protect crime victims who defend themselves, their family or property from being sued for injuries they may inflict on their assailants.

Criminals can only now sue for damages for such injuries if they have permission from a court which is satisfied that what happened to them was "grossly disproportionate". But since the legislation came into force in 2004, the only people to have used it in an attempt to head off paying damages have been – the police! Yet there was nothing in the wording of the legislation or during the debate in parliament which indicated an intention "to afford police a novel protection from claims by offenders for objectively unreasonable or unnecessary violent arrests", said Lord Justice Sedley.

The judges' criticisms came in a test case involving Anthony Adorian, a 43-year-old Londoner whose brief encounter with police in 2004 left him disabled from a multiple fracture of his hip and leg of such severity it looked as if he'd been in a car crash. Police had been called after he had had a row with his daughter, and he claims he was attacked by three officers after he saw them speaking to her in the street and went out to intervene.

Mr Adorian complained to the Independent Police Complaints Authority and when, by August 2007, his complaint had still not been resolved, he issued a claim against the Met alleging assault, including a claim for aggravated and exemplary damages over his injuries.

To his and his lawyers' surprise, this was met with an application by Inspector Knacker to strike out the claim because Mr Adorian had received a conditional discharge for obstructing police. Knacker argued that as a convicted person his case should not proceed because he had not sought or been granted any prior permission from a court.

The judges ruled that the requirement of prior permission was not mandatory, therefore it could be sought after the issuing of proceedings – and they promptly gave Mr Adorian the go-ahead.

The ruling means that at least 10 civil actions brought against the police without prior court permission can now proceed. But the real question is whether the current attorney-general, Baroness Scotland QC, who introduced the measure as a late amendment to the 2003 criminal justice bill, will undo the damage it has done to civil rights.

In the City

AT THE heart of the suspected Madoff-style massive "Ponzi scheme" perpetrated by "Sir" Allen Stanford was his ability to operate the Stanford International Bank (SIB) and its attractive certificates of deposit from the tiny and corrupt island of Antigua.

Stanford adopted the Victor Kiam approach to the Caribbean island – he liked it so much that he bought it. In that way he was not the first and will not be the last to take that route to financial success. The pirates of the Caribbean are still alive and well; some, unlike Stanford, are still in business.

"Quantitative easing? What the hell is quantitative easing?"

The formula is simple. Find a small, recently independent or still British-ruled dependency. Arrive offering development and finance. Obtain in return valuable local monopolies and citizenship. Write the laws that govern the financial sector. Become the dominant bank. Finance local political parties and the government. Look after those in power. Buy protection from big-country regulators. Make money.

Stanford arrived when the Bird family ran Antigua. He moved his Guardian International Bank there from nearby Montserrat after being encouraged to leave by the British authorities and Scotland Yard's inquiries. Guardian grew into SIB, while Stanford also acquired the Bank of Antigua and became the government's banker and lender of last resort, even down to its payroll.

His dominant position and role in the financial sector ensured that banking legislation was never going to get in his way. The historic concerns expressed by the US and British authorities about what was happening in Antigua were detailed in *Eye* 1216 last August – just one of the red flags about "Sir" Allen and his bank.

The local Financial Services Regulatory Commission was never likely to regulate such a dominant and influential figure, even after Lester Bird was kicked out as prime minister in 2004. (He may yet return in elections due next week.) Just how compromised the regulator was can be seen in its reluctance even to start an investigation when it was aware that three US agencies were on the case.

That local influence is also crucial in understanding the role of the SIB auditors, the small local firm CAS Hewlett. This was essentially a one-man firm run by the septuagenarian Charlesworth "Shelley" Hewlett, who died in January. Despite the London addresses for his firm and a London home, the SIB audit – such as it was – was conducted entirely in Antigua. No work was done at the rented offices in London, which Hewlett visited infrequently.

Family sources claim that instead Hewlett regularly employed a handful of individual British and Irish accountants who were flown out to assist with the paperwork. However, Hewlett is said to have been personally in charge of the audit. He admitted to an investigator that this was nominal and that in reality he merely signed the required papers and took a cheque from SIB. The bank's accounts were what Stanford wanted them to be. Which may explain why the SEC found the firm unresponsive – assuming it attempted to make contact before Hewlett died.

Hewlett was well connected locally. His firm featured in the scandal of a missing $1m grant to the local football association from the world governing body Fifa, exposed by investigative sports journalist Andrew Jennings in 2003. Hewlett denied that it had audited the grant, which had gone to a former employee and a Bird associate.

There were representatives of the big four beancounters in Antigua, but Stanford chose not to deal with them. For what he wanted, they would have almost certainly asked too many questions. Hewlett was another of the red flags highlighted again in *Eye* 1226 in December, as rumours of problems and investigations at SIB grew.

In Switzerland, where "Sir" Allen had established Stanford Group (Suisse) in Zurich in 1997, Stanford used as his auditors a member of the BDO group. No doubt they will be helping with the US inquiries.

But embarrassment over Stanford will not be restricted to sunny Antigua. There will be plenty of red faces elsewhere, too.

Foreign & Commonwealth Office officials knew a lot about Stanford, both from his period in Montserrat during the late 1980s and then in Antigua. In 1999, Britain, like the US, warned against doing business with local (ie Stanford's) banks because of suspicions of drug-money laundering. When *Private Eye* requested last August that the FCO disclose under the Freedom of Information Act what it knew about Guardian International Bank, the request was refused – for reasons of "commercial sensitivity" and "international relations". The FCO admitted to holding 32 documents referring to the bank, which surrendered its Montserrat licence to pre-empt revocation.

Then there is Labour donor Sir David Garrard, former chairman and significant shareholder in troubled Florida property developer American Leisure Group. ALG delisted from AIM in January after raising £75m in 2007. The company was developing an Orlando resort called Tierra del Sol. Stanford had been banker to ALG and its predecessor company since 2004. Last year Stanford loaned ALG $28.5m with the last of a $17.5m facility drawn down in December – just before Stanford ran out of money. Not surprising, as Stanford was a 15 percent shareholder. However, the company has struggled to complete the development and is being sued by angry would-be condo owners. Just how much ALG shares are worth now is unclear.

Then there is the only banker on the SIB board, former Barbados central bank governor and diplomat Sir Courtney Blackman. Contacted in January and asked whether he had any concerns and might resign, he said he had not resigned but refused to answer any more questions.

Finally, there is the embarrassment for the US authorities, who were only too aware of Stanford and his bank – far more so than with Bernie Madoff – but did little to stop him. Political pressure is said to have overruled state regulators' objections to the idea of Stanford doing business in Florida, thanks to his political donations. There are also suggestions that Stanford may have been a federal informant on some of the bank's lesser clientele suspected of drug-money laundering. SIB concentrated on banking for the unbankable, especially in Latin America. Much of its deposits were "hot" money (flight capital), while some was "dirty" money from drugs.

If he was an informant, then this may have bought some protection and could explain why the SEC was told to back off in 2005. All too often complainants were either foreign depositors or insiders considered without enough good information to make a case. Throughout 2008, US investigators were looking to make a case against Stanford but it probably took the $50bn Madoff bombshell to make it happen.

As with Madoff, the question may be just how much money was ever really in Stanford International Bank? Certainly not the $8bn suggested by its fictitious accounts. But whether it was always a con or became one out of greed or necessity, and when, remains to be determined.

"ALL UK-based directors are members of the Royal Bank of Scotland group Pension Fund… and are contractually entitled to receive all pension benefits in accordance with its terms. The RBS Fund rules allow all members who retire early at the request of their employer to receive a pension-based accrued service with no discount applied for early retirement. The Remuneration Committee has reviewed this provision of the RBS Fund… The Remuneration Committee concluded that a change to the terms of the RBS Fund in respect of early retirement at the company's request would not be a cost-effective route to take at this time."

So wrote Bob Scott, chairman of the RBS remuneration committee, to shareholders in last year's annual report.

The same RBS report disclosed that chief executive Sir Fred Goodwin had accumulated a pension "pot" transfer value of £8.4m by December 2007, projected to be worth £579,000 a year on retirement at 60. The accounts also noted that this transfer value contained "no allowance… for any enhanced benefits that may become payable on early retirement".

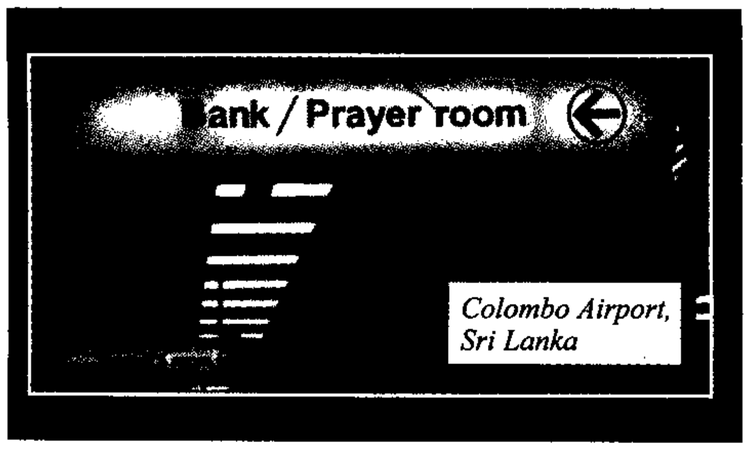
Scott's report was dated 27 February 2008. Less than eight months later, he and chairman Sir Tom McKillop agreed to top up Fred the Shred's pension with another £8m, giving him an immediate pension at 50 of £693,000 a year in return for going quietly and immediately. It was a decision that shareholders, led by HMG, may now agree was certainly not "cost-effective".

Given what was in the RBS accounts, it is hard to see how a savvy City figure like Paul Myners could have imagined that the extra £8m

☛ *See over...*

THE DIRECTORS

DREDGE & RIGG



was discretionary (as he now claims), when it was always, as he says he first assumed, contractual. Such generous, non-contributory pension schemes are the norm for City banks. But all that Myners and his pals Gordon and Alistair wanted to ensure was that there was no "golden goodbye" reward for failure. The pension pay-off was conveniently ignored – at least, it was until everyone realised it would be disclosed in the forthcoming RBS accounts.

The only "discretion" would have been whether RBS sacked Goodwin for cause or let him walk. "In the event of situations involving breach of the employing company's policies resulting in dismissal, reduced or no payments may be made," the same RBS report explains.

Given the near bankruptcy of RBS that Goodwin had overseen, that could have been an option. But only if the RBS board were prepared to see him in court and wash all their dirty boardroom linen in public. Negligence or breach of company policy when approved by the board – including McKillop and senior "independent" non-exec Scott – would be hard to prove.

Which is why there are always rewards for failure. Contracts assume competence, so incompetence could be "due cause" to dismiss. But companies prefer chief executives to go quietly with a Goodwin-style gag, which is cheap at the price, say their lawyers. Fighting Fred could easily have eaten up that £8m and made RBS, now owned by the taxpayer, look even worse than it does already.

So why not blame the outgoing RBS directors for misleading the trusting Lord Myners and his political bosses, and Fred the Shred for greed beyond avarice? Especially ahead of even more bad news for the taxpayer on the RBS bill and the inevitable row over the £693,000 come the RBS accounts later this month. How much easier for all in Westminster and Whitehall to claim they were shocked, shocked to learn, despite what is in last year's annual report, that Goodwin was entitled to an enhanced pension!

What has followed has been little more than political posturing not just by Harriet Harman but also by Brown, Darling and Myners. They all know that legally Goodwin and his pension are probably bombproof but cannot admit that because of their failure to act back in October.

Revisiting the non-existent profits from which RBS paid into his highly generous pension – back in 2002 the transfer value was a mere £1.9m – would run the same bad publicity legal risk as sacking Goodwin. So he was home free with at least the first £8m. Pensions are seen as an almost sacrosanct contractual legal right, and no court is likely to agree to retrospective confiscation.

One option could be to sue the RBS directors for breach of duty in awarding Goodwin that extra £8m or the pension's potential lifetime cost of £30m-plus. That would probably be what would have already happened in the US, with a shareholders' action similar to that taken against Conrad Black. But would Gordon want that when the RBS directors' defence would be that the government knew and accepted their decision when it was first made and then confirmed by the board in January?

What this shows is what a big mistake it was for the government not to do what it said it was going to do when it first announced it was going to bail out the banks – appoint directors immediately to protect the taxpayers' interests.

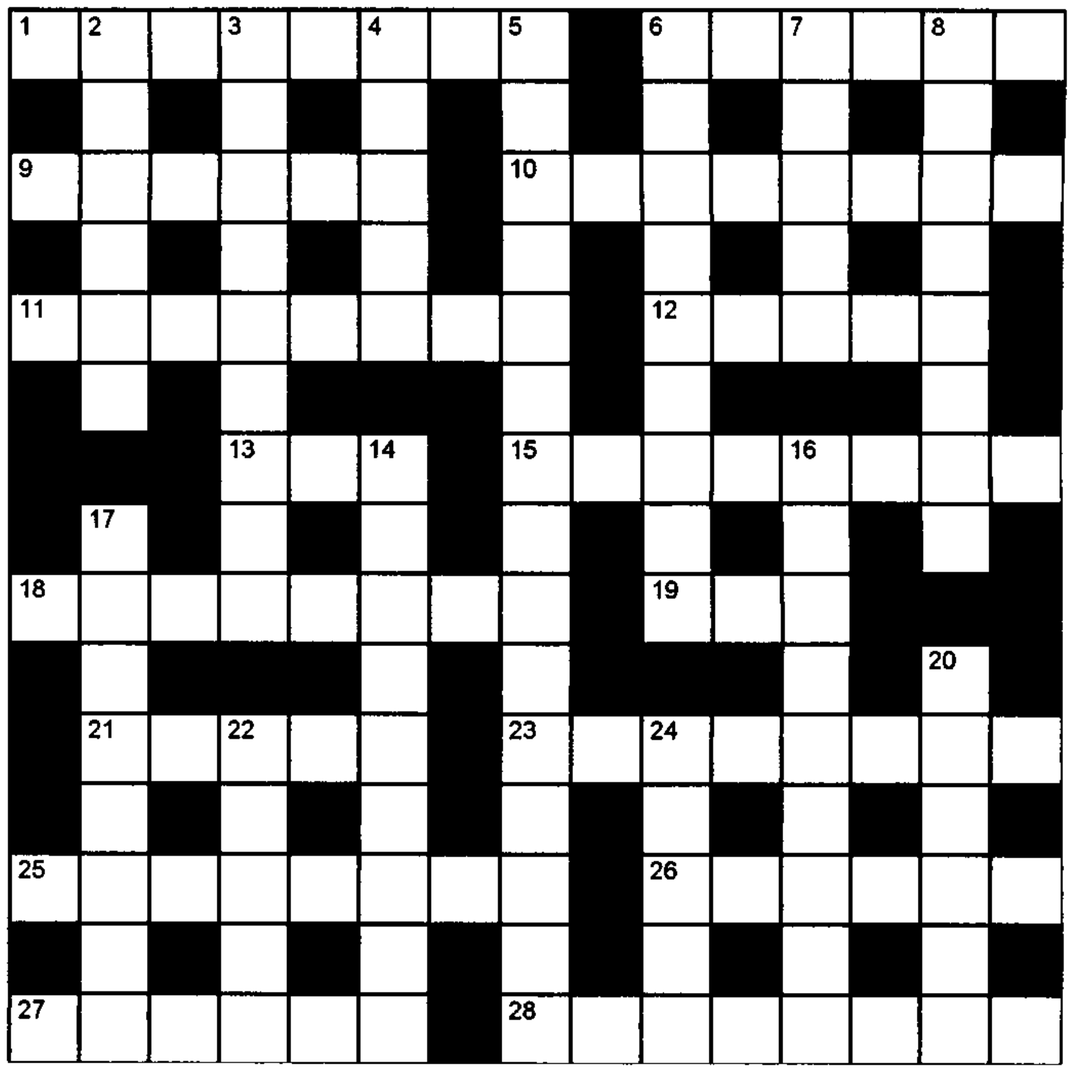
'Slicker'

EYE CROSSWORD 386

by Cyclops

£100 prize to first correct solution opened on 13 March 2009

Entries to 'Crossword', Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN or via email to crossword@private-eye.co.uk



ACROSS

1 Meek sort, note, before start of hernia operation, gets meaty boner (4,4)
6 A ponce's fancy hood (6)
9 Party-backed records of borrowing getting up one's nose (6)
10 Getting close, organ having bad smell – leave (5,3)
11 Like cheap necklace on organ that might be kept on suspicious type (5,3)
12 The beach is good in Martinique when having girl (5)
13 John Bull's last pair of balls (3)
15 Like porn? – ring producer, flower! (8)
18 Immersed in Attlee fiasco, Tony half abstaining (8)
19 Set to get leg over (3)
21 Archer's thing: "I anticipate at last being a pioneering hero" (5)
23 Troublemaker wants broadcast undermined (8)
25/26 Limit euro-voter's movement – hidden agenda? (8,6)
27 Book handily obscures Salman's opening inside (6)
28 Fast to grab fashionable, cushy job (8)

DOWN

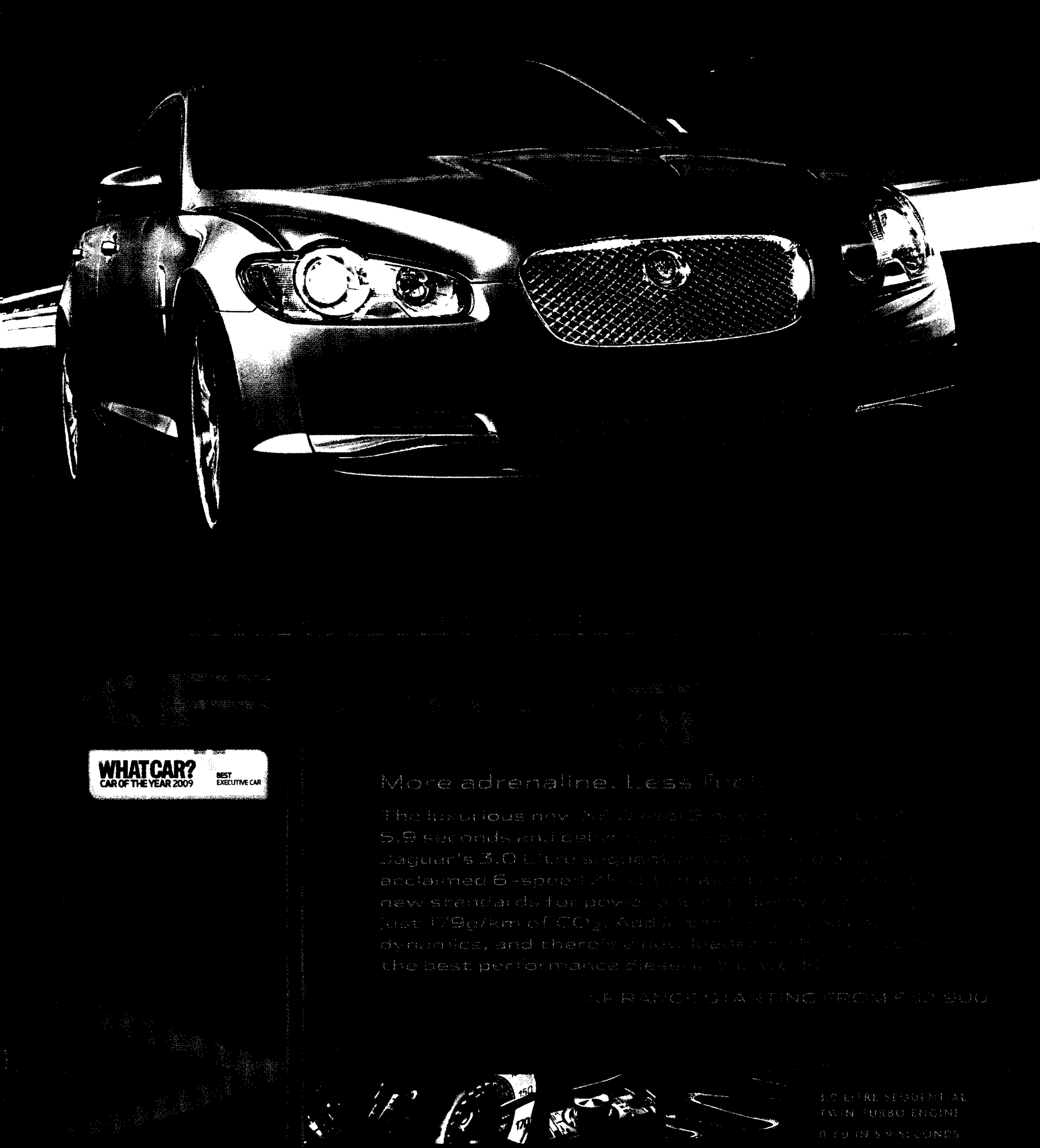
2 One took out "one's offspring"? (6)
3 "Gore twat" is hardly a circulation booster (5,4)
4 Full of amphetamines, she screwed novelist (5)
5 Sexual manipulation taking advantage of pouch in pants (6,9)
6 Thatcher, bo, urged housing (town) (9)
7 Ex-president prone to get blown (5)
8 Vulgarly said excitement quite lacking, knickers, say, being unadorned? (2,6)
14 Boozing put out one's hip (second time) (2,3,4)
16 "Testicle twitch" is internalised – and being worked up makes one "go" so (9)
17 Court demand – get knackered again (3,5)
20 Work hard, Fanny (6)
22 Revolver wife put against arse (5)
24 Played against King, Mother Nature's top spinner (2,3)

Crossword 385 winner: MRS J. HAINES

ACROSS: 6 Starkers 8 Brenda 9 Abseil 10 Gross pay 11/15 Secretary of state 13 Talc 17 Prudish 19 Leak 20 Interlace 23 Viscount 24 Behind 26 Albert 27 Helpline.

DOWN: 1 Stable 2/25 Arsehole 3 Reality TV 4 Sex scandal 5 Advances 7 Sugary 8/22 Boom-bust 12 Rat-catcher 14 Green belt 16 Fallible 18 Snatch 21 Caning.

HUSBAND


WHAT CAR?
CAR OF THE YEAR 2009
BEST EXECUTIVE CAR
More adrenaline. Less fr
The luxurious new XF
5.9 seconds and delivers
Jaguar's 3.0 Litre sequential
acclaimed 6-speed
new standards for power
just 179g/km of CO2. Add
dynamics, and there's
the best performance
XF RANGE STARTING FROM
3.0 LITRE SEQUENTIAL TWIN TURBO ENGINE
0 TO 60 IN 5.9 SECONDS
6 SPEED ZF AUTOMATIC TRANSMISSION
OUTSTANDING RIDE AND HANDLING
JAGUAR
FUEL CONSUMPTION FIGURES FOR JAGUAR XF DIESEL S: MPG (L/100KM): URBAN 30(9.5)
EXTRA URBAN 51.3 (5.5) COMBINED 42.0 (6.8) CO2 EMISSIONS 179 G/KM

PRIVATE EYE

The perfect gift for yourself or a friend

For as little as £1.08 a fortnight Private Eye will keep you amused and informed all year round.

PRIVATE EYE
NEW COMEDY QUIZ SHOW!
I'm sorry...
I haven't...
...clue!
BANKERS PANEL GAME
PRIVATE EYE
INSTANT STOCK MARKET ANALYSIS
AN AT-A-GLANCE GUIDE TO THE WORLD'S FINANCIAL STATUS
OBAMA TAKES OV
Can we still blame Bush for everything?
YES, WE CAN!
Your subscription WILL SAVE YOU £11 on the shop price. Don't delay – SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

Subscribe online at
www.subsonline.co.uk
or call our order hotline
01795 414 870
or complete the order form below and send with payment to:
PRIVATE EYE, PO Box 326,
Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 8FA

☐ **Yes! I would like to subscribe to PRIVATE EYE for one year (26 issues).**

☐ UK £28 ☐ Europe (Airmail) £34 ☐ Rest of World (Airmail) £38

❶ Your details: (for gift subscriptions – this is where we send the gift card)

Title Initial Surname

Address

Postcode Tel. no.

Email

* Don't miss out. We send our best offers by email.

You may cancel at any time and receive a full refund on outstanding issues. PRIVATE EYE is serious about protecting your privacy. We do not share or sell data about our subscribers.

SOURCE CODE: N1231

❷ ☐ Gift subscription. Please send Private Eye to:

Title Initial Surname

Address

Postcode Tel. no.

❸ Payment details:

☐ by Direct Debit – just call 01795 414 870 with your bank details

☐ by cheque made payable to PRIVATE EYE

☐ by credit card. Please debit my Visa Mastercard Switch

Card number:

Valid from Expiry date Switch issue no

Cardholder's signature_____Date_____

PEOPLE DON'T GROW OLD LIKE THEY USED TO

why should your money?

Whether you devote yourself to food and the good life, or just savour every minute, the chances are you'll want to carry on. Now you can. The Self Invested Personal Pension from Standard Life enables you and your money to be as active as you want to be. With the **active money** SIPP you have the flexibility to decide whether to invest in equities, cash, commercial property or bonds and when to start taking an income in the most tax efficient way. Terms and conditions apply.

STANDARD LIFE

To find out more about active money SIPPs, go to www.activemoneysipp.com or call 0845 777 5000 (calls may be recorded and monitored and call charges may vary).

active money for an active future

Standard Life Assurance Limited, registered in Scotland (SC286833), Standard Life House, 30 Lothian Road, Edinburgh EH1 2DH. Authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority. Standard Life Investments (Property Nominees) Limited, registered in Scotland (SC160846), also Standard Life Investments (Property Management) Limited, registered in Scotland (SC160845), both at 1 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 2LL. Telephone calls to 0131 225 2552 may be recorded and monitored. standardlife.com. S_SIP351A109 ©2009 Standard Life. All rights reserved. Unauthorised reproduction prohibited under law.

OM SAI RAM

Don't join the recession – beat it!

Looking 'the business' more important now than ever, says bespoke tailoring king.

It's the question every professional man and woman on the planet is asking right now; what is the best way to present yourself when doom and gloom are in a neck and neck race for world domination?

More specifically, just how 2009 is sackcloth and ashes as a businesswear look? Read the media in anywhere in the world, and you could only conclude that with the way things are going, the hair shirt, preferably with worn-out shoes and a frayed collar will be only appropriate fashion for the coming year.

But Hong Kong's pre-eminent master tailor Raja Daswani, the man now hailed globally as the world's leading authority on the smart, perfectly fitting, exquisitely-made – yet amply affordable - suit, begs to differ. 'Dressing for success has never been more important than in these days of recession and depression,' he says.

'An immaculate suit practically hypnotises people,' explains the man whose passion for fashion has transformed the wardrobes – and the lives - of hundreds of thousands of men and women worldwide. 'Without making its point loudly or brashly, a fine suit argues with unswervable conviction that its wearer is supremely competent, totally in control and has impeccable taste.'

'These above all are the qualities you need to prosper in these difficult times. You look good, feel good, be good and, ultimately, do good.'

'A good, hand-made bespoke suit is as effective as a superb c.v. at giving a good impression. A perfect suit makes your point for you, but subtly. Nobody is resistant to the message a great suit conveys.'

'The effect – some even call it the Raja magic suit effect - is strangely contagious,' he continues.

'People are drawn to well presented people. By contrast, sadly, nobody likes to do business with or associate with people who look like a walking recession. I think there's a feeling that it's catching.'

'I am so convinced by my decades of experience of making fantastic suits at a crazily low price that I virtually guarantee a Raja suit will change your life for the better,' Mr. Daswani concludes.

And because he wants more people to look good and do good in today's challenging world, Mr Daswani's suit empire, Raja Fashions, is pitching into the recession with a couple of incredible offers.

It's not just the unbeatable price of a Raja Fashions suit. (We are talking £169 for a fully made-to-measure summer suit in a lightweight wool or linen, to £325 for a 100 per cent wool, entirely hand-finished suit in a British or Italian cloth, with every refinement from hand-made buttonholes to knee lining, exotic jacket linings and double thickness pockets.) Even the most expensive suit, made in deluxe superfine wool for £1,500, costs a third less than it would on Savile Row.

But first off in Mr Daswani's Recession Special Package, he is offering one free hand made-to-measure shirt free with every suit you purchase.

Secondly, special for 2009, he is pledging to give a proportion of the (already amazing) price of each custom-cut, hand-stitched suit he sells to charity.

While you are very welcome to make your way to bustling Cameron Road, Kowloon to visit Raja Fashions' store, the store will equally come to you – in cities all over the world, several times a year. Thanks to the magic of technology, Mr Daswani and his team can measure you up for the full Hong Kong Monty without your needing to travel often further than your nearest big city. Often, your suit will be started on by a tailor 10,000 miles away before you've even left his mobile sales suite. You can have it sent by courier within a week or so if it's urgent – or wait for a second fitting when the Raja team hits your town again a few weeks later.

Over the past thirty soaringly successful years, the Raja suit revolution, with its inspired mix artistic flair, entrepreneurial genius and digital technology, has practically seen off the traditional, ill fitting, robot-finished off the peg British high street suit.

Whether you're attracted by quality, style, price, or sheer convenience, a Raja Fashions suit is the perfect a sartorial solution to tough times.

But be warned. Mr Daswani doesn't do sackcloth.

Or ashes.

Business hours 10am - 8pm

(by appointment only)

email: raja@raja-fashions.com

Mobile: 07786 543258

Tel: 0163 557 4233

Website: www.raja-fashions.com

CUSTOM MADE BESPOKE SUIT CLOTH BY ERMENEGILDO ZEGNA

BEFORE ~~£1,500~~ **NOW £750**

RAJA FASHIONS

Main Shop: 34C Cameron Road, Ground Floor, Kowloon, Hong Kong.
Tel:(852) 2366 7624 Fax:(852) 23692807

London	**Sheraton Park Tower**	**Dublin**	**Dublin Four Seasons Hotel**	**EUROPE**	
Mar 18-22	101 Knightsbridge, SW1X 7RN	Mar 11-13	Simmonscourt Road, Dublin 4,		
London	**Hilton London Tower Bridge**	**Heathrow**	**Sheraton Heathrow**	**Frankfurt**	**Hilton Frankfurt**
Mar 25-25	5 More London Place, SE1 2BY	Apr 4-5	Heathrow Airport, UB7 0HJ	Mar 16-18	Hochstrasse 4, 60313 Frankfurt
London	**Hilton Paddington Hotel**	**Leeds**	**Leeds City Hilton**	**Hamburg**	**Hamburg Marriott Hotel**
Mar 28-31	146 Praed Street, W2 1EE	Mar 23-24	Neville Street, Leeds, LS1 4BX	Mar 16-18	ABC Strasse 52, Hamburg 20354
London	**Pear Seasons Hotel**	**Manchester**	**Renaissance Manchester Hotel**	**Antwerp**	**Hilton Antwerp**
Mar 31-Apr 1	46 Westferry Circus, E14 8RS	Mar 21-22	Blackfriars Street, M3 2EQ	Mar 21-22	Groenplaats, B-2000 Antwerp
Belfast	**Holiday Inn**	**Nottingham**	**Crowne Plaza Nottingham**	**Brussels**	**Hilton Brussels City**
Mar 9	22 Ormeau Avenue, BT2 8HS	Mar 19-20	Wollaton Street, NG1 5FH	Mar 23-24	Place Rogier 20, Brussels, BR 1210
Birmingham	**Hyatt Regency Blamingham**	**Oxford**	**Old Bank Hotel**	**Luxembourg**	**Hilton Luxembourg Hotel**
Mar 17-18	2 Bridge Street, B1 2JZ	Mar 30-31	92-94 High Street, OX1 4BA	Mar 26-27	12 Rue Jean Engling
Bristol	**Bristol Marriott Hotel**	**Reading**	**Penta Hotel**	**Zurich**	**Zurich Marriot Hotel**
Apr 1-2	2 Lower Castle Street, BS1 3AD	Mar 26-27	Oxford Road, RG1 7RH	Mar 28-30	Neumuehlequai 42, Zurich 8001
Cambridge	**Royal Cambridge Hotel**	**Southampton**	**Hilton Southampton**	**Geneva**	**Hotel Novotel Geneva Centre**
Apr 2-3	Trumpington Street, CB2 1PY	Mar 26-28	Bracken Place, SO18 3RB	Apr 1-2	Rue de Zurich 19, 1201 Geneva
Cardiff	**Cardiff Hilton Hotel**				
Apr 3-4	Kingsway, Cardiff, CF10 3HH				

Details of our up and coming tours can be found on www.raja-fashions.com

INTRODUCING THE TRAVEL BROCHURE THAT BROADENS THE MIND.

ON THE right is a cruise brochure unlike any other.

Its 56 pages contain not one photograph of a ship silhouetted against a setting sun or a deck lined with sun loungers.

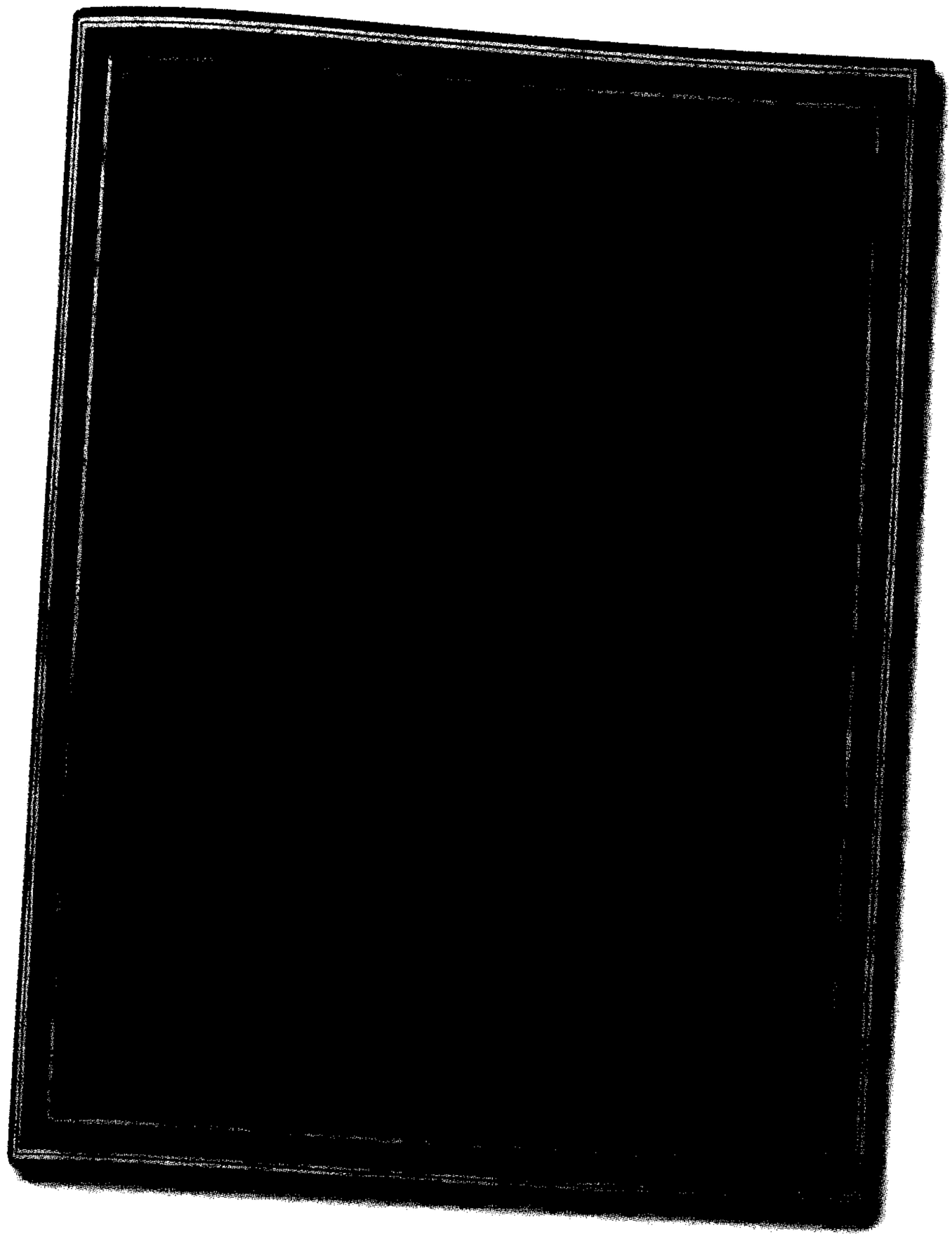
Instead, the visual appeal is provided by evocative historical prints of some of the most remarkable sights of the Mediterranean. These striking images are accompanied by detailed and elegantly written descriptions of our five cruise itineraries.

The reason for this unusual approach is simple. Martin Randall Travel Cruises are designed for people with an interest in history, archaeology and the arts. Indeed, they hark back to a century-old tradition of intellectual cruising.

You'll see that each itinerary has a meticulously planned theme. On pages 18-25, for example, you can read all about In Pursuit Of Caravaggio, a popular cruise that visits southern Italy, Sicily and Malta, tracing the career of this tempestuous painter. Mindful of the fact that Caravaggio was a man prone to spectacular eruptions, there are also opportunities to visit and view (from a safe distance!) the volcanoes of Vesuvius, Etna and Stromboli.

Pages 41-47 are – and this may be a first for a holiday brochure – devoted to Ancient Greek Philosophy. This cruise offers a delightful introduction to the foundations of Western thought and takes in numerous sites on the Greek mainland and islands, many of them unfrequented. (Note that, true to the spirit of Plato's Symposium, there are also two experts on Greek wine among the lecturers.)

More food for thought is provided by The Romans In Africa, which explores the great ruined cities along the coasts of Tunisia and Libya; The Matisse Cruise, which takes in the sites and scenes which inspired some of the greatest art of the twentieth century; and Classical Civilisations Of The Aegean, which considers the development of the eastern part of the Mediterranean, from the Minoans to the Byzantines.



There are up to four lecturers on each cruise, and they are central to the success of the trip. Naturally enough, they are professional academics, writers and curators who enjoy worldwide reputations in their chosen fields. But we also choose them because they convey their learning with wit and enthusiasm. In short, they are very good travelling companions.

The ships selected for the sailings are both small but extremely well-appointed vessels. Pleasingly, you'll find no casino, no disco and definitely no piped music. Bars remain open till the early hours, but the main source of evening entertainment is conversation with your lecturers and like-minded travellers.

As one Sunday newspaper commented recently: "Martin Randall's unashamedly highbrow floating university delivered superbly."

If you'd like to peruse our prospectus, sorry, brochure in more detail, please call **020 8742 3355** for your free copy. (Or if you prefer pixels to paper, just visit **www.martinrandall.com**)

Highlights of The Romans In Africa cruise: Day 1: Fly from the UK to Tunis. Moor at La Goulette overnight. Day 2: Tunis. View remains of Punic Carthage. Visit the Bardo Museum, the world's finest collection of floor mosaics. Day 3: Anchor off Sousse. Visit El Djem, and the third largest amphitheatre in the Empire. Optional excursion to Roman colonia of Thuburbo Maius. Sail through the night for Libya. Day 4: To the ruined city of Sabratha for an atmospheric performance of Purcell's Dido and Aeneas in the Roman theatre. Day 5: Tripoli, and the remarkable display of Greek and Roman sculpture in the Jamahiriya Museum. Days 6 & 7: Two days spent at Leptis Magna, one of the world's most spectacular ruined cities. Day 8: Sail across the Gulf of Sirte. Day 9: Ptolomaïs, with its famous 'House of Columns' and municipal cisterns (the largest in Africa). Fine exhibits in the museum. Day 10: The vast site of Cyrene with its magnificent 5th-century Doric Temple and colonnaded gymnasium. Day 11: The ancient port of Apollonia, and a Græco-Roman theatre, where actors dramatise readings from Classical authors. Sail to Crete. Day 12: From Heraklion fly back to London.

AITO THE ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT TOUR OPERATORS

MARTIN RANDALL TRAVEL

PRIVATE EYE

Advertise here and reach over 796,000 potential customers, it's so easy!
(Source: NRS, June 2008)

Display Advertising please call Ian Mehrer on 020 7878 2366
Semi-Display Advertising please call Robert Grant on 020 7878 2308
Classfied Advertising please call Katie Balogun on 020 240 9129 / 020 7878 2319

www.eyeadvertise.co.uk **email: private-eye@tenalpspublishing.com**

£2.75 per word (£25 min charge). Centred box £15. Box number £15. For just £10 extra your ad can also appear on our website: **www.eyeadvertise.co.uk** All charges inc VAT

Would advertisers please note that copy deadline for Classfied / Semi Display for 20th March issue will be 1pm, Tuesday 10th March

Would advertisers please note that copy deadline for Display for 20th March issue will be 5pm, Wednesday 11th March

Eye Art

INTELLIGENT ARCHITECTURE www.murrayjohn.com

CAST BRONZE PORTRAIT HEADS OR TORSO made from 3D scan or photos. sales@rapidart.co.uk 01628 622768

PSSST. WANNA BUY A BANKSY? Visit www.spitalfieldsartmarket.co.uk

ARTIST SEEKS PORTRAIT SITTERS. How do you see yourself? www.markrussell.me/portrait

Eye Wear

PUKKA PYJAMAS AND NIGHTSHIRTS for men, women and boys. www.pukkapyjamas.co.uk

Eye to Eye

Replying to a box number is as simple as sending a letter, just send your reply to Private Eye, Ten Alps Publishing, 9 Savoy Street, London, WC2E 7HR. Remember to quote on your envelope the box number to which you are replying..

MINDS MATTER @IVORY TOWERS
The intelligent online dating site
For graduates of all eras.
www.ivorytowers.net

LOVING LINKS. UK's leading discreet adult dating service since 1994. Unique top level one-to-one matching service and fast online email system. Call David for a chat 08456 440 919.

ARTS LOVER; tres charmant) Gourmet rather than gourmand?! Vintage mature; d'humour too?? Then I am the IT Girl for you! BOX NO. 278411

MEET A WOMAN who is NOT looking to exchange favours for financial gain. www.meetme-in2009.co.cc/

KCDATING Age 35+ *with* no upper age limit Speed Dating events for Grown-Ups! LONDON (City) April 1 Manchester April 15 LONDON (West End) April 22 Online bookings at www.kcdating.co.uk KCDATING will find your soul mate through it's PRIVATE CLIENT MATCHMAKING ARRANGEMENTS! David Mintz, 'Matchmaker 'Extraordinaire' is currently available for individual bespoke consultations. To secure an appointment please telephone 01728 635064 or 07986 213120

PERSON TO PERSON – non-internet magazine for new friends/partners. Est. 1984: still going 'cos it works! Details (Dept PE), PO BOX 40, Minehead TA24 5YS. Tel: 01643 709509.

HARD-WORKING NURSE seeks less pressurized times ahead. Attractive, articulate good company. Wit and womanly warmth awaits. Telephone : 07765050305

ONLINE DATING FOR CHRISTIAN SINGLES - no membership or subscription fees whatsoever - www.harmonypartners.com

JETLAGGED? Air-Hostess has occasional time in London 07952 369222 or Paris 0033626218858

THE COUNTRYSIDE DATING SITE: www.countrysidelove.co.uk

Ladies, do you fancy dating with a difference?
Call or e-mail Sara
on: 07017362722 or
saragabanna@live.com

FEMALE WANTS SPOILING TAKEN TO DUBAI, travelling by 6ft. Single 30-45 good linguist male. Please call 07956895847

Eye Help

PROBLEMS? Psychotherapeutic bodywork - the creative alternative to counselling. http://www.bodytherapy.biz

Eye Novelties

STUFF YOUR STOCKINGS @www.gizmoandwidget.com Shopping for fun

TITLES-LORD, LADY ETC. Tel/Fax 0800 652 6641. www.elitetitles.co.uk

DESIGN YOUR OWN CD CLOCK, with personal photo and message, for £6.99 plus postage. Healthy alternative to Mothers' Day chocolates! www.designoclock.com

JUNAGARH, NOW THAT'S DIFFERENT. Buy our stuff and help kids and teachers in Paraguay & Cuba. More detail. www.junagarhmedia.co.uk

Eye Bet

TEXAS HOLDEM Applying the Texasholdem strategy techniques to your game, you can go from a losing hobby player to making £15k p.a as I did. www.texasholdemprime.co.uk

Eye Travel

GOOD FOOD & GOOD HOTEL GUIDES? Clear Air, Pure Water & Sheer Enjoyment. Colwall Park Hotel in the breathtaking Malvern Hills – Featured in Michelin, Good Food & Good Hotel Guides. Gourmet breaks from only £90.00 pppn 2+nts. 01684 540000 - www.colwall.co.uk

CORFU - Charming Beach Villas with Private Gardens & Pool in Friendly Resort. Tel 02089605286 www.VillaOwnersCorfu.com

ALGARVE VILLA BY BEACH, garden, pool, non-estate, walking distance shops jjt3@cantab.net

GROUP HOLIDAYS with friends in stunning properties. www.pureescapes.com

CARPE DIEM TOBAGO Incredible Sunsets,Seaview,Beach,Fishing village,Write that novel? www.castara.net

NORTH CORNWALL COAST. Much loved and well refurbished family house let as a holiday home in prime location. Two minutes walk from wide sandy beach. Surfing and sailing within easy reach. Sleeps 9 - suitably laid out for 2 families or 3 generations together. Check out: www.torquilcottage.com or Tel: Charlotte, 01225 840 224.

VACATION DEFLATION? Don't let the Crunch spoil next year's holiday. Try a house swap anywhere in the UK. Join for free at www.ukholidayswapshop.co.uk.

CATALAN MASIA PENEDES WINE REGION. Pool, views, sleeps 11+. www.cal-gimeno.com.

NEWLY RESTORED FARMHOUSE on the Umbrian/Tuscan border, sleeps ten, spectacular infinity pool, huge family room. Five hectares, wonderfully peaceful with views over two castles and the Niccone valley. 45 minutes from Perugia airport (Ryanair). Details and prices from matthewgould@yahoo.com

WORDS/IMAGES? VERBALS/VISUALS? Exclusive arts/leisure breaks, Carcassonne. Featured in "100 Best Worldwide Vacations" book. www.frenchhouseparty.co.uk

Eye Business

MULTISTREAM INTERNET INCOME POTENTIAL 24/7 - add this to your crunch survival plan www.internet4prosperity.co.uk

GOLF. WORLD'S LONGEST, STRAIGHTEST DRIVER. Patented, approved technology. $500 million market. Seek help licensing to majors. 0207 794 1798. russ@pero.demon.co.uk

The CORPORATE UNIVERSITY MANAGER On-line Action Learning Programme. Equip yourself for the new era of management. Information at www.g-acua.org

PROFESSIONAL, respected couple who travel widely, looking for an opportunity to improve income. Any suggestions welcome. bentleyroyal@btinternet.com

Eye Read

A FABLE FOR OUR TIMES: The Plowman - www.theplowman.com

FREE ONLINE NOVEL: psychological horror with humour and sex. Visit simonfaustus.com/novel.htm

FOR AN ALTERNATIVE to the West-centred view of world conflict, try www.midwife-mission.org.uk

SICK OF SCAM EMAIL? Want humorous vengeance? Eureka. Revenge On The Scammers by Cazzy Jones, from Amazon.co.uk or publisher Youwriteon.com.

Eye Say

Attempted Kidnapping of Princess Anne, 1975. Startling revelations about this event. See www.ianball.me.uk.

Black Widow Internet/ Crystal Clear Global Solutions. Anyone else badly bitten? Please e-mail: artisan.tv@hotmail.com

Eye Law

HAVE YOU BEEN LET DOWN BY YOUR SOLICITORS OR DOES YOUR SOLICITOR LACK THAT CUTTING EDGE? Ahmud & Co. Solicitors, the lawyers that make a difference. www.ja-solicitors.com Tel: 020 8886 1111 or info@ja-solicitors.com No Legal Aid.

YES, you can now come direct to a barrister. Tel: 020 7833 9625.

FIND ANYBODY: www.locateperson.net Debt recovery – expert private investigation. Call +44 (0)121 247 5550 and 07773 788389.

DIVORCED/DIVORCING? Defend your assets/income. We fight your corner. Thirty years experience. Contact Divorce Dept, Pellmans, 1 Abbey Street, Eynsham, Oxford, OX29 4TB. Tel: 01865 884400 mail@pellmans.co.uk

THE 'NO WIN – NO FEE' Specialists: Professional Negligence (www.proneg.co.uk). Disputed Wills & Employment Law (www.sblaw.co.uk). Accident Claims (www.newdeal-fairdeal.co.uk). Free case assessment. Telephone: 0808 155 6389.

Eye Buy and Sell

WE BUY PRE-63 EYES, OZ, IT Friends etc- nderground@shoreditch.net

FACTORY SURPLUS computers and notebooks, printers, digital cameras, DVD etc, etc. www.morgancomputers.co.uk or call 0870 126 4830.

OLD PERSIAN RUGS – mostly £100-£3000. Not a shop just a shed. DESMOND NORTH, East Peckham, Kent. TN12 5JB. Telephone 01622 871 353.

A CLEAR VISION FOR BRITAIN! Nope, not more Tory hype, but what you get from our state of the art, but cheap as chips flat screen TVs. For more brilliant offers call 0845 900 1230 for your nearest store or check out www.richersounds.com

BRIGHTER BABIES' BOOK BASKETS The educated baby gift. www.brighterbabiesbookbaskets.co.uk

www.ichoseit.co.uk Quality Gifts for Women from independent designers. Gift Wrap Option. Your Problem Solved!

HOUSEBOAT, low cost permanent mooring Suffolk, Easy London access. 4 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, 2 receptions, 2 offices, large storage areas, Jetty with sheds. £200k e-mail:do@pepin.demon.co.uk

STUCK FOR A GIFT? Choose from our wide range of jewellery and watch boxes at www.boxofjewels.co.uk

YOUR OWN FLOATATION TANK will de-stress, impress, undress with www.floataway.co.uk, EYE reader discount.

GREECE'S NO 1 brand of olive oil WWW.ELANTHY.COM Free delivery

Eye Need

FINANCIER WITH SHARIA EXPERIENCE required to help with writing next blockbuster. London or SE. please contact 07850642617 BOX NO. 278380

HUSBAND HID DEBT OF 60K. Now struck by stroke. Desperate many thanks. Sort code 16-52-21 Account 51562758

ARTS CAFE CIC IS £20K SHORT OF REALISING ITS DREAM! tabernaclecafe.co.uk 07-01-16 40542883

EYE NEED A BUYER FOR STUDIO APARTMENT IN DOCKLANDS. Pied a terre or investment.£199,000 tel. 07961123244

DEVESTATED 45YR OLD FEMALE lost all in break up, 15k needed to purchase council home with 70% discount. so grateful. abbey 57076734/09-01-26 donnypenny@yahoo.com

600 X £10 BADLY NEEDED. Too many things have gone wrong. 09-01-26 43900131

DISABLED LADY two degrees relocates for job, spends savings on carpeting etc. Made redundant. Please £1 from readers would be very gratefully accepted. 30-98-69 20165068 sjd22@britpost.com

EVERY £1 WELCOME will help this struggling family and earn their gratitude. Thank you. 40-47-87. 11043943

NEED TO SOURCE HOT GRADUATE TALENT FOR YOUR FIRM? We have unrivalled access to the brightest minds from top universities. sanctuarysearch@sanctuarynewspaper.co.uk; 0203 1451504

LADY NEEDS £25K. Not begging, in return I'm an excellent conversationalist, listener, organiser, bookkeeper. ACC80571123 SC600947. iwtlml09@googlemail.com. Oxon

WORLD BRONZE MEDAL ACROBAT seeks sponsorship to continue training. details sponsoranacrobat@yahoo.co.uk

£25K GIFT NEEDED only if you can afford to spare it: S/C 18-00-02 Acct 07343779 Thank You

MIDWIFE DISTRESSED BY DYING CAR/DEBT - HELP!? 20-35-47 30071013

Housesit wanted by caring creative professional family. Muswellhillish area. sarah@sarahmcmenemy.com. 07976 288298

Genius writer journalist composer, 35, seeks interesting paid work 2-3 days pw. 07974 207829 or reach_saul@yahoo.com

Eye Services

PRIVATE LONDON CLINIC: (Moorgate/Old Street tubes) offers walk-in and postal sexual health services, online impotence treatment. Open evenings. Tel: 020 7490 8988. www.DrThom.com

REMOVALS AND STORAGE: UK and European. www.bayesofhampstead.co.uk Tel: 020 7435 3694.

FIND ANYBODY: www.locateperson.net – James Black LL.B(Hons) expert private investigation, international +44 (0) 121 247 5550 and 07773 788389.

SPEECH LOOMING? Relax, I'll write it for you! You're due to speak at a wedding / dinner / event. Don't waste time worrying. Lawrence: 07970 046 230 or www.greatspeechwriting.co.uk

STOP THE BUGGERS Professional Security Sweeps www.stopthebuggers.com Email : info@stopthebuggers.co.uk Tel : 01342 719361

WEBDESIGN: www.suburban-glory.com. Affordable, quality webdesign for all.

HOME INFORMATION PACKS. HIPS FOR £185 + VAT 02920 666999 KEYLEGAL@BTINTERNET.COM

WWW.Tracingpeople.net info@tracingpeople.net Tel :- 01342 719361 Fax :- 01342 71964

HOW TO GET A DIPLOMATIC PASSPORT - www.diplomaticpassport.com

NEW 'NO WIN, NO FEE' for professional negligence, debt, employment and will dispute claims by specialist Solicitors. Freephone 0800 169 2133. www.halborg.com

MICROSOFT EXCEL Spreadsheets, Data Analysis, Databases, Models built to requirement and emailed. Remote working, confidential MBA financial analyst team, long experience blue-chip to start-ups. Satisfaction or no payment. After sales support. 07815 933517 jake@vetroconsulting.com

Eye Donate

www.sightsavers.org

www.oxfam.org.uk

www.SmileTrain.org

www.C-R-Y.org.uk

www.blind.org.uk

www.liberty-human-rights.org.uk

www.gwt.org.uk

www.actionforchildren.org.uk

PRIVATE EYE Live!

Hear Ian Hislop, Harry Enfield, John Sessions, Lewis MacLeod, Jan Ravens, Richard Ingrams and Craig Brown reading from the *Private Eye Annual 2008* live on stage at the Lyttelton Theatre via the brand-new...

eyePlayer

FEATURING: *Tips to Beat the Credit Crunch... Prime Ministerial Decree... Dumb Britain... Colemanballs... The Book of Ehud... The Ballad of Speaker Martin...* and *Harold Pinter's Nursery Rhymes* as recited by Craig Brown.

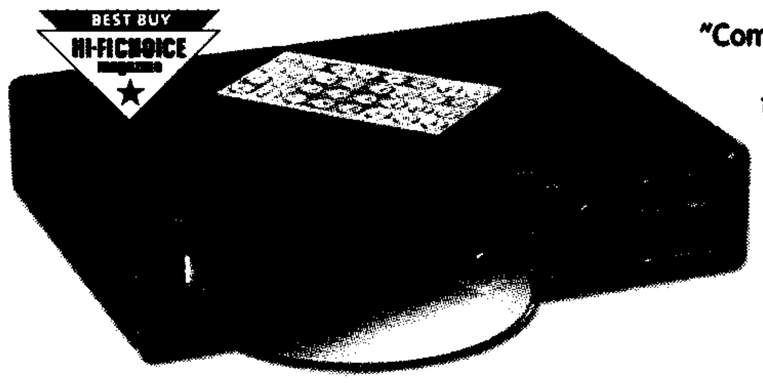
PLUS:

- Online **PSEUDO NAMES SPECIAL**... making the unprintable unmissable!
- **THE PRIVACY DEBATE:** Ian Hislop talks to Radio 4's *Law In Action* about Max Mosley and freedom of the press

All at www.private-eye.co.uk

Got CDs?

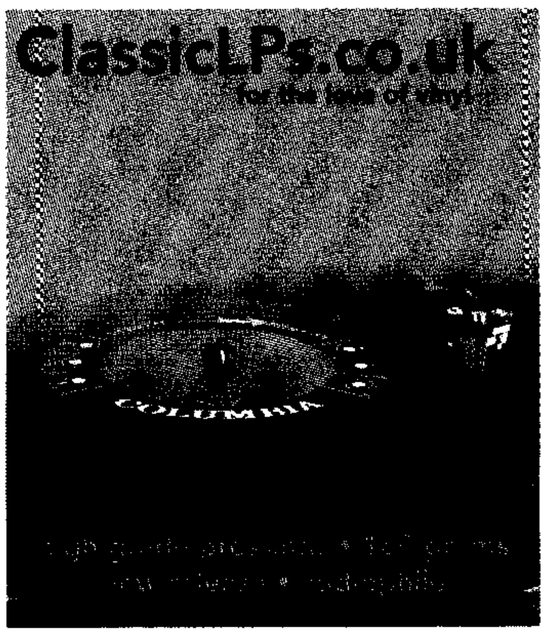
The **Brennan JB7** is a new kind of CD player that holds up to 2,500 CDs. You can find and play a specific track or album from your armchair in seconds. Or play your entire music collection with one click.



"Compact & ultra-simple... the JB7 shows superb clarity of thought and engineering"

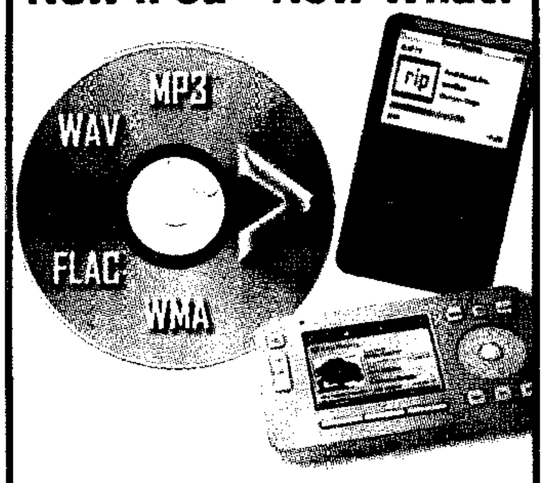
GRAMOPHONE

www.brennan.co.uk • 01638 615117



ripcaster.co.uk

New iPod - Now What?



Tel: 0118 321 82 92 www.ripcaster.co.uk

Let us convert your CDs

We Do It For You

Lost out due to bad advice?

Why don't you sue your accountant/solicitor /surveyor?

Contact: GORVINS on 0800 015 9986 or email enquiries@gorvins.com

APPLEBY ASSOCIATES
Executive Career Consultants

Worried about your future?

We can help.

www.Appleby Associates.com
0845 66 55 215

CHAPMAN
HAND CRAFTED CANVAS BAGS
MADE IN ENGLAND
www.chapmanbags.com
+44 (0)1228 514514

www.redmolotov.com
I'm the one the Daily Mail warned you about.
BLAME SHOE WILL PROTEST
I TOLD YOU I WAS TROUBLE
I WARNED YOU THAT THIS WOULD HAPPEN
CLOSING DOWN!
Over 500 troublesome t-shirts www.redmolotov.com

Have you got room to express yourself?

garden retreat or simply more space to work or relax.

T: 01949 860 482
E: info@garden-studios.com

garden studios

www.garden-studios.com

For semi display advertising call Robert Grant on 020 7878 2308

BELLINI BABY©

THE ULTIMATE BABY GIFT

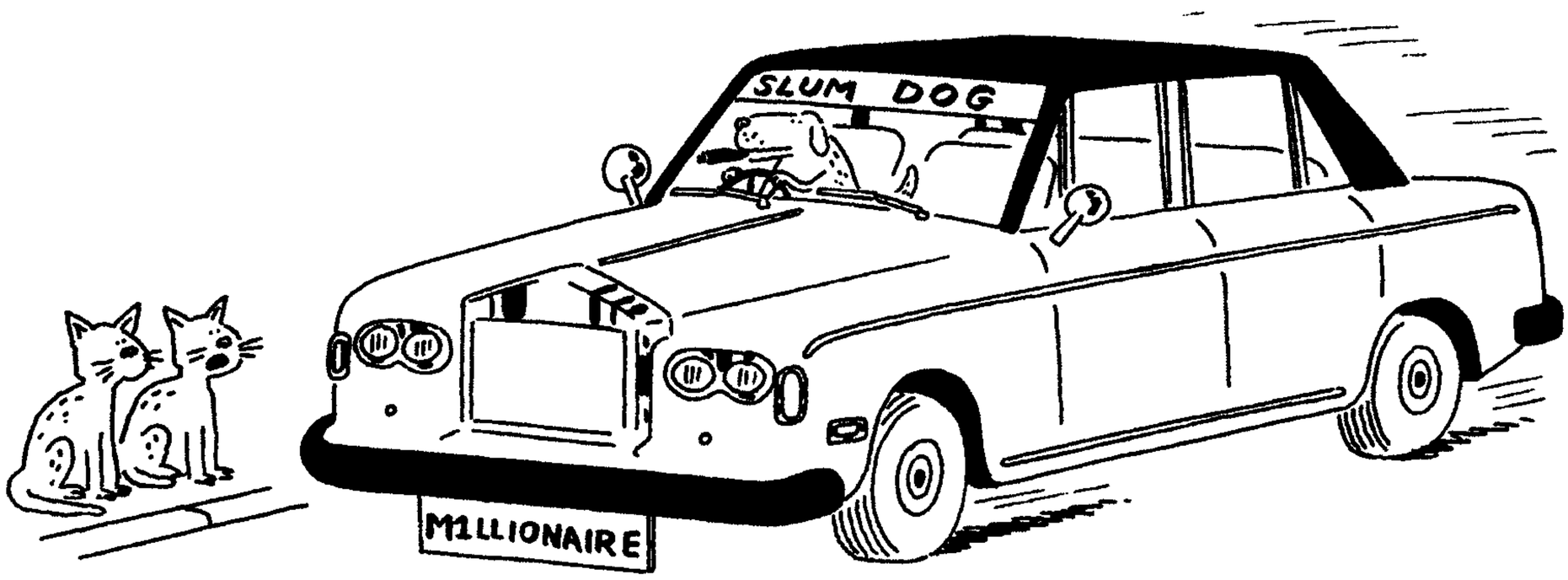
BELLINI-BABY.COM

YSE RECESSION BUSTERS
£599 per person per week, in any chalet still free in February & March
(exc 15 Feb & 29 March)
Save £100 - £500 per person!!

YSE
Val d'Isère

www.yseski.co.uk
0845 122 1414

Witan...



"'OH NO, IT WON'T CHANGE ME' HE SAID."

wisdom

If you're feeling more like a slumdog than a millionaire these days,
you may wish to consider becoming a Witan investor.

Witan investment trust

0800 082 81 80 | www.witan.com quoting ref. 4983

Please remember, past performance is not a guide to future performance, and the value of your shares and the income from them can rise and fall, so you may not get back the amount originally invested. Issued and approved by Witan Investment Services Limited. Witan Investment Services Limited is registered in England no. 5272533 of 201 Bishopsgate, London EC2M 3AE. Witan Investment Services Limited provides investment products and services and is authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority. Calls may be recorded for our mutual protection and to improve customer service.

Long-term global investments.
This ISA offers a simple way in.

Scottish Mortgage Investment Trust PLC

Your low cost choice for global investment

Scottish Mortgage is an investment trust that makes long-term investments in global companies. We search all over the world for businesses with above average returns. The result? A diversified, global portfolio, which offers you the potential for long-term growth.

To make things simple, you can invest in Scottish Mortgage through our Investment Trust ISA from just £100 a month or a £2,000 lump sum. Please remember that the value of your investment and any income from it can go down as well as up and you may not get back the amount invested.

Investments can be affected by changing stock market conditions and currency exchange rates.

To find out more about investing in Scottish Mortgage through the Baillie Gifford Investment Trust ISA, visit **www.scottishmortgageit.com** or phone **0800 027 5227**. You can also apply for an ISA online at **www.bailliegifford.com/oms**

BAILLIE GIFFORD

Managing investment trusts since 1909

We may record your call. Baillie Gifford Savings Management (BGSM) is the manager of the Baillie Gifford Investment Trust ISA and is wholly owned by Baillie Gifford & Co, which is the manager and secretary of the Scottish Mortgage Investment Trust PLC. Your personal data is held and used by BGSM in accordance with data protection legislation. We may use your information to send you information about Baillie Gifford products, funds or special offers and to contact you for business research purposes. We will only disclose your information to other companies within the Baillie Gifford group and to agents appointed by us for these purposes. You can withdraw your consent to receiving further marketing communications from us and to being contacted for business research purposes at any time. You also have the right to review and amend your data at any time.

9 770032 888129 09 >

PE/SM